S. HRG. 99-566

# ROLE OF THE FEATURE FILM INDUSTRY IN A NATIONAL EFFORT TO DIMINISH DRUG USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

PERMANENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

## COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 24, 1985

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# ROLE OF THE FEATURE FILM INDUSTRY IN A NATIONAL EFFORT TO DIMINISH DRUG USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1985

U.S. SENATE,
PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met at 10:03 a.m. in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, under authority of Senate Resolution 85, section 13, dated February 28, 1985, Hon. William V. Roth, Jr. (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members of the subcommittee present: Senator William V. Roth, Jr., Republican, Delaware; Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat, Georgia; Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., Republican, Maryland; Senator Lawton Chiles, Democrat, Florida; Senator Ted Stevens, Republican, Alaska; and Senator Albert Gore, Democrat, Tennessee.

Members of the professional staff present: Daniel F. Rinzel, chief counsel; Eleanor J. Hill, chief counsel for the minority; Katherine C. Bidden, chief clerk; Barbara Kammerman, staff counsel; Mary Vinson, investigator; Leonard Willis, investigator for the minority; Cynthia Christfield, staff attorney; Carla Martin and Debbie Kamens, secretaries; and Charlie Osolin, press secretary.

[Senators present at the convening of the hearing included Senator Roth only.]

Chairman ROTH. The committee will please be in order.

[The letter of authority follows:]

WILLIAM V. ROTH, JR., DELAWARE, CHAIRMAN
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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
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SENATE PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE
ON INVESTIGATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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ELEANORE J. HILL, CHIEF COUNSEL TO THE MINORITY

Pursuant to Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, permission is hereby granted for the Chairman, or any Member of the Subcommittee as designated by the Chairman, to conduct open and/or executive hearings without a quorum of two Members for the administration of oaths and taking testimony in connection with hearings on The Role of the Feature Film Industry in Deglamorizing Drug Use, to be held on October 24, 1985.

Bill Roth
Chairman

Sam Nunn
Ranking Minority Member

## OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ROTH

Chairman ROTH. Today, we return to a subject of grave national interest—drug abuse and how to stop it, particularly among young people. Drugs cause devastating physical and mental problems. Recent reports of the dreadful effects of designer drugs, drugs that are concocted in bootleg labs and that may or may not be illegal under current law, strengthen our resolve to eradicate drug abuse in our Nation. When I say "drugs," I mean illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin; I also mean alcohol and prescription drugs which are abused, such as amphetamines and barbiturates.

The subcommittee has looked for many years into various ways to diminish the supply of drugs in this country. Recently, we have tried to examine the best methods to curb the demand for drugs, as well. It may well be that our best shot for preventing a new generation of drug users and abusers is to reach young people before they get hooked or try out drugs. That means drugs must be deglamorized.

What power can we wield against drugs? We try to educate young people, of course. Parent groups are emerging around the country, and together with teachers, they are actively gathering information and disseminating it whenever they can. We applaud those efforts. But like all of us, young people are citizens of a wider world and receive messages from sources other than parents and teachers.

It is undeniable that the media—television, films, radio—have a tremendous impact on our youth. We are told, for example, that clothing styles were greatly affected by such films as "Annie Hall" and "Flash Dance." There is no question that the media has the ability to shape attitudes, and especially those of the impressionable young.

Recognizing this tremendous influence, the subcommittee held a hearing in March that focused on the TV industry. A followup story in Parade magazine by Mike Satchell generated thousands of letters from concerned parents, as one of our witnesses will tell us later. At the March hearing, I spoke about a different kind of star war, a war waged by the stars. I meant by that to draw attention to the power that stars have over our young people and to commend those stars who were speaking out against drugs. We are fortunate to have with us today one of those stars, Mr. William Shatner. I am sorry to announce that his plane has been delayed because of weather conditions. We expect him shortly, and accordingly, we will change the order of our witnesses.

Today, we continue our star war, but on a different trek. Wouldn't it be great if the stars had the power of the Vulcan mind meld to transmit the message that drugs are bad. Our hearing will focus on the feature film industry, the industry that targets teenagers as one of its primary markets, and I am pleased to say that we will hear from representatives of the industry about the positive steps it is taking to communicate the evils of drug use.

Let me mention that the industry has worked hard and well with the First Lady. It recently turned out in large numbers to honor Mrs. Reagan's formidable antidrug campaign, and at the same time

collect more money for use in the campaign. This is an excellent step in the right direction.

But there are more battles to be won. We will hear from representatives of parents, of religious groups about what more they think the industry should do. They will discuss the movie industry's rating system, a self-imposed system that classifies films according to the age of suitable viewers. We will hear about how the system works, as well as about proposals to change it to provide parents with more information about the drug content of films.

Let me emphasize here that we are very sensitive to first amendment concerns. The last thing we want to do is endorse censorship. Hence, we are looking into what the entertainment world itself is doing and what more it can do on a voluntary basis.

We think that freedom of the press and freedom of the arts is basic to our democracy. We believe drugs can be deglamorized without infringing on the first amendment.

Let us remember what we are fighting for here, the youth of our Nation, the greatest national treasure and our future stars.

At this time, we will call forward Barbara Kammerman, who is staff counsel. Barbara, would you please stand and raise your right hand?

Do you swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Ms. KAMMERMAN. I do.

Chairman ROTH. Please proceed.

## TESTIMONY OF BARBARA KAMMERMAN, STAFF COUNSEL, PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Ms. KAMMERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The staff of the subcommittee set out to determine what, if anything, the feature film industry was doing to deglamorize drugs. We, therefore, talked to exhibitors, distributors, producers, writers, and creative people. We talked to parents. We talked to representatives of Action and NIDA, the National Institute for Drug Abuse, which are the Federal agencies that most closely work with the industry in a national campaign to deglamorize drugs.

What we learned from industry executives was that they are all very interested in the issue of drug abuse, that they think about drugs. In fact, they say they consider drugs when they determine whether or not to make a film. Most of the executives told us that drug content was bad business. Many of the executives are themselves parents, so they are also concerned that drugs not be glamorized in the films.

What they told us is that their companies have no formal policies as to how to deal with drug content, and also that the companies have no formal policies as to when they will make public service announcements. They all do, however, make public service announcements, and both Action and NIDA representatives told us that company representatives were responsive to their requests.

Similarly, we spoke to theater owners who told us that they have no formal policies about when to show public service announcements or public service messages. But all of them said that they do

show them and that they would be amenable to further requests to show them.

Everyone in the industry said that they were interested in the issue of drug abuse. They spoke of initiatives within the industry, and Mr. Valenti, who will testify this morning, I am sure will tell the chairman and the subcommittee what the industry is doing in that regard. When the industry executives talked to us, they told us of a growing sensitivity on the part of the industry as to the manner in which drugs are depicted. Now, the parent groups that we talked to: we spoke with representatives of the National Federation of Parents for a Drug-Free Youth; we spoke with representatives of Families in Action; we spoke with representatives of the Parent Resources Institute for Drug Abuse; and we spoke with other community and religious organizations. They take issue with that statement. They think that the industry does show what they deemed gratuitous drug use, which is drug use on the screen that is not necessarily related to the plot, and also that they show glamorized drug use, that is positive drug use or drug use without negative consequences.

What these parent groups seem to be calling for are two specific things: They ask that the industry make a conscious effort not to subtly or not so subtly glamorize drugs. And they also asked for more information so that they can make better decisions as to whether or not their children should be permitted to see certain movies.

That second request brings me to the rating system. I won't spend a lot of time discussing it, because Mr. Valenti, who is himself its father, will, I am sure, discuss it at length.

Let me say here that it's the system, the voluntary rating system you alluded to which labels movies G, PG, PG–13, R, and X. Those labels are designed to classify movies in such a way that parents can make informed decisions as to which movies they should let their children see.

I should say that theater owners and producers and distributors told us that virtually all movies that are widely distributed in this country are submitted to the voluntary rating board for a designation. Now, at the March 20 hearing held by the subcommittee on the role of the entertainment industry in deglamorizing drugs when we focused on television, Larry Stewart, a representative of the Entertainment Industries Council, and also a member of the Caucus of Producers, Writers and Directors, spoke of a proposal at the Entertainment Industries Council [EIC] for a resolution that it had endorsed, and that proposal called for two things, among other things. It called for a subrating, that is a rating of SA, for substance abuse that would be used in addition, so that a movie that had drug content would be labeled, for example, R–SA. It would be restricted to those 17 and under—17 and over unless accompanied by a parent, and parents would be notified that there was drug content.

The other thing that the Entertainment Industries Council resolution called for was, and I quote, "The inclusion of specific criteria in the movies' rating review process which takes into consideration the depiction of substance abuse without negative consequences."

Let me say that I have here a statement submitted by Larry Stewart and Brian Dyak on behalf of the Entertainment Industries Council, and attached to it is a copy of the EIC's resolution. With the chairman's permission, I would submit this for the record at this time.

Chairman ROTH. So ordered.

[The statement of the Entertainment Industries Council for the record follows and is marked Exhibit No. 1:]

EXHIBIT NO. 1

TESTIMONY

OF

THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL, INC.

SUBMITTED BY

BRIAN L. DYAK, PRESIDENT

AND

LARRY STEWART, MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BEFORE

THE SENATE PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

ON

OCTOBER 24, 1985

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TESTIMONY. IN 1983, THROUGH THE WORK OF THE CAUCUS FOR PRODUCERS, WRITERS, DIRECTORS, MR. CHAIRMAN, THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY IN HOLLYWOOD BECAME ALERTED TO THE FACT THAT PERHAPS PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, AND WRITERS SHOULD TAKE A HARDER LOOK AT WHAT WAS HAPPENING, BOTH IN OUR INDUSTRY, AND IN THE NATION, WITH REGARD TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE.

IN LATE 1983, THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL WAS ORGANIZED TO LEND THE INDUSTRY SUPPORT TO OUR NATION'S WAR ON DRUGS. THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL FOCUSSED ON THE RATING SYSTEM FOR FEATURE FILMS, AND, AFTER ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION, AND PASSAGE OF A SPECIFIC RESOLUTION (ATTACHED) RECOMMENDED TO PETITION FOR THE ADDITION OF A SUB-CATEGORY TO THAT SYSTEM TO BE IDENTIFIED AS "SA" FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

THIS DECISION WAS LAUNCHED ON MARCH 20, 1985, IN TESTIMONY BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE. WHAT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUGGESTED TO MR. JACK VALENTI, HEAD OF THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MPAA), WAS THE POSSIBILITY FOR CONSIDERING A THIRTY-SIX (36) MONTH TRIAL PERIOD, TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THAT SUB-CATEGORY RATING (SA/SUBSTANCE ABUSE).

SINCE THE MARCH DATE, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE UNDERTOOK TO AMASS A BODY OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO ASSIST THE MPAA IN IDENTIFYING THE THEATRE GOING PUBLIC'S CONCERN IN THIS MATTER. WE ARE ABLE TO

DO SO BECAUSE OF OUR OUTREACH TO OTHER INTEREST GROUPS INVOLVED WITH THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUE. THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL, INC. IS THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ARM OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES TO USE THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE COMBINED ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES TO STEER OUR NATION, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, AWAY FROM DRUG USE.

AS A RESULT OF OUR RESEARCH INTO THE PROBLEMS OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE, WE CAN REPORT THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR COMMITTEE, MR. CHAIRMAN:

1. A RECENT COLUMN WRITTEN BY NATIONALLY SYNDICATED COLUMNIST JACK ANDERSON, ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM, PRODUCED SEVERAL THOUSAND LETTERS IN RESPONSE, URGING ADOPTION OF SUCH A SUB-CATEGORY RATING.
2. ON JULY 21, 1985, A PARADE MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MICHAEL SATCHEL, APPEARED. THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL WAS INFORMED THAT THE RESPONSE FROM READERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SUPPORTING THE PROPOSAL OF A "SA" SUB-CATEGORY WAS AN ALMOST UNPRECEDENTED 52,000 LETTERS.
3. THIS ISSUE, AND THE WORK OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS EARNED US THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS: THE 4-H CLUBS, THE PTA, THE ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR LEAGUES, THE LIONS, THE ROTARY, THE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF STATES, THE QUEST PROGRAM, THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE, REPRESENTING AN AGGREGATE MEMBERSHIP OF FIFTEEN (15) MILLION.

THE COALITION CHAIRMAN INDICATED THAT IF WE TAKE THAT FIFTEEN MILLION MEMBER FIGURE, AND AVERAGE ABOUT 2.65 PEOPLE PER FAMILY, WE WOULD GET SOME IDEA OF THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, OVER 35 MILLION SUPPORTERS. RESPONDING TO AN INQUIRY, DR. DONALD L. STORMER, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF 4-H AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT OF THAT ORGANIZATION REPORTED THAT THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE 4-H NATIONALLY, STANDS AT FOUR AND ONE HALF MILLION, A LIVING ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF SIX HUNDRED AND TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE. MR. STORMER STATED, "ALL OF OUR CONSTITUENTS WOULD FIND IT MOST USEFUL TO HAVE A RATING SYSTEM TO ASSIST THEM IN GUIDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR YOUTH."

4. WE WOULD LIKE TO ADD, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT APART FROM THE SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL COALITION, WE ALSO HAVE RECEIVED THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF M.A.D.D. (MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING), TOUGHLOVE CHAPTERS NATIONALLY, WHICH HAVE BEEN SPRINGING UP ALL ACROSS THE NATION, AND THE CHEMICAL PEOPLE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE, AN ORGANIZATION GROWING OUT OF THE EFFORTS OF THE FIRST LADY, NANCY REAGAN, AND THE LEADERSHIP STANCE SHE HAS TAKEN IN THE NATIONAL WAR AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

5. AS WORD SPREADS, WE HAVE DISCOVERED LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN OUR WORK. WE HAVE RESPONDED TO REQUESTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NEW JERSEY DRUG ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, AND FROM STATE OF WASHINGTON HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION.

ALL OF THE ABOVE REPRESENT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, ACTUALLY RESPONDING TO RECOMMENDATIONS PUT FORTH IN OUR RESOLUTION. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE, AT LEAST IN THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY, THAT THE AVERAGE PRESSURE GROUP, BY THEIR OWN ADMISSION, CAN RARELY REACH MORE THAN ONE MILLION PEOPLE ON ANY SINGLE ISSUE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ARE NOT PROPOSING A CENSORSHIP ROLE FOR ANYONE, NOT FOR MR. VALENTI'S ORGANIZATION, NOR FOR ANYONE ELSE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES CAN CONTROL THEIR OWN DESTINY. WE ARE NOT SAYING TO ANYONE, "DON'T MAKE THE MOVIES..." WE ARE SIMPLY SAYING THAT WHEN SUCH MOVIES ARE MADE, IN WHICH SUCH INCIDENTS OCCUR, THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE BE PORTRAYED WITH EQUAL CONCERN AND REALITY.

DURING THE DAYS OF THE HAYS OFFICE, THEIR MAIN CONCERN WAS "TO SEE THAT THE BAD GUYS GOT THEIRS..." WE HAVE THE SAME CONCERN, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE SAME RESULTS. WE ARE ASKING THAT MPAA CONSIDER THE ADDITION OF THE "SA"/SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUB-CATEGORY OR INITIATE A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO MODIFYING THE RATING SYSTEM, AN ADDITION WHICH WOULD HELP PARENTS OF GROWING CHILDREN MAKE BETTER DECISIONS ABOUT THE KINDS OF MOVIES THEY WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO BE WATCHING. MR. VALENTI IS A MEMBER OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES, A GROUP COMPRISED OF THE PRIMARY LEADERSHIP OF THE MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION INDUSTRIES. WE BELIEVE THAT THE MPAA IS RAPIDLY BECOMING A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TOWARDS CREATING A MORE RESPONSIVE

INDUSTRY TO OUR NATION'S PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY, MR. CHAIRMAN, IN BOTH FEATURE FILMS, AND TELEVISION, HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO LOOK MORE CAREFULLY AT THEIR SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS NATIONAL WAR AGAINST DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE. WE NEED EVERYONE'S HELP IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.

* * * *

Entertainment
Industries
Council, Inc.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, the movie industry has the capability to advise the public, especially parents, that substance abuse is depicted in movies without negative consequences; and

Whereas, many youth oriented feature films depict drug or alcohol use as glamorous, humorous, and without negative result; and

Whereas, drug use and alcohol abuse have become a national problem of epidemic proportion; and

Whereas, non-prescription drug use and alcohol use by minors is illegal; and

Whereas, depiction of an illegal act without negative consequences should be given equal consideration in rating movies as: theme, language, nudity, sex and violence; and

Whereas, the VOLUNTARY MOVIE RATING SYSTEM should include depiction of drug or alcohol use without negative consequences in the current rating process; and

Whereas, the Classifications and Ratings Administration, Motion Picture Association of America, National Association of Theatre Owners, and International Film Importers and Distributors of America should recognize the important contribution that can be made in behalf of society by adoption of a special movies rating sub-category that advises the public as to the depiction of substance abuse without negative consequences; and

Whereas, such action is in the best interest of parents, children, and the entertainment industry; and

Whereas, adoption of a rating sub-category of SA for substance abuse would be a definitive statement by the movie industry that acknowledges a partnership in our nation's war on drugs:

Board of Directors
Ralph Andrews, Chairperson
Producer
Columbia Pictures Television
Tim Conway, Vice Chairperson
Actor
Brian L. Dyak, President
CEO, Entertainment
Industries Council, Inc.
Thomas H. Cole, Secretary
Producer
William N. Utz, Treasurer
Attorney
Jack Anderson
Columnist
Nancy Dochty
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Jay Bernstein Productions
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Vice President/TV Series
Lorimar Productions
Michele Lee
Actress
Gerald McRaney
Actor
Tim Reid
Actor
Jay Rodriguez
Vice President, NBC
Herman Rush
President
Columbia Pictures Television Group
Larry Stewart
Producer-Director

☐ 8715 Lowell Avenue
McLean, VA 22101
703-356-8511

☐ 12720 Burbank Boulevard
Suite 328
North Hollywood, CA 91607
818-505-8000

A non-profit organization

RESOLUTION CONTINUED
PAGE TWO OF TWO

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL, INCORPORATED HEREBY ENDORSE THE INCLUSION OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA IN THE MOVIES RATING REVIEW PROCESS WHICH TAKES INTO CONSID - ERATION THE DEPICTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE WITHOUT NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, AND WHEREBY, THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL, INCORPORATED FURTHER RECOMMENDS THE ADOPTION OF AN SA (SUBSTANCE ABUSE) SUB-CATEGORY RATING THAT DOES APPLY TO THE EXISTING RATING CATEGORIES.

APRIL 2, 1985

For more information, contact the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (818) 505-8000 or (703) 356-8611.

ELLEN AND LLOYD WELLS
35 OLD POWERHOUSE ROAD - FALMOUTH, MAINE 04105
(207) 781-2597

September 19, 1985

Entertainment Industries Council
12720 Burbank Blvd.
Suite 328
North Hollywood, Ca. 91607

To whom it may concern,

I have just read the MADD (MOthers Against Drunk Driving) newsletter outlining a possible "SA" rating (substance abuse) for films. I would like to express my support for such a move.

I grew up in the 30's and 40's when movies were rife with the glamorous, grown-up habits of smokers and the funny, W.C. Fields approach to drinking and drunkenness. I know what an impact these depictions made on me. (I spent a great deal of time at the movies.) With a great deal of difficulty I gave up smoking in my 30's, having put in 15-20 years of "glamorous" puffing. I lost friends in car accidents who were drunk; and drinking was a part of the "scene" at every party. After all, if Cary Grant and Barbara Stanwyck could do it, why not us?

Now young people have double the trouble: TV is much more pervasive than films in a movie theatre; all sorts of drugs are easily available everywhere. Everyone knows the cause and effect of smoking, drinking and drug taking that the media has. No studies needed here. The advertising industry has done that for us. Their millions of dollars talk loud and clear.

I therefore hope to see an "S.A." rating adopted. It's a pretty weak reed to lean on in a hurricane, but it's a beginning. If the makers of films and TV shows continue to show the morals of ants in honey, we the people MUST do <u>something</u>.

Sincerely yours,
Ellen V. P. Wells
Ellen V. P. Wells

cc: MADD

4511 Freedom Road
Kissimmee, FL 32741
September 19, 1985

Entertainment Industries Council
12720 Burbank Blvd., Suite 328
North Hollywood, CA 91607

Gentlemen:

As the parents of a daughter who was murdered by a 17 year old girl who was driving drunk, we are very interested in the use of an "S A" [substance abuse] code for films which include objectional alcohol and/or drug use scenes, including driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, without showing the results of such behavior. Young minds are quite impressionable and can be led to think that drinking and drugs are a fun thing without any consequences to themselves or others.

We feel that the use of an "S A" code could be helpful in preventing many tragedies among young people and others.

Sincerely,

Larry Von Hagel

Larry Von Hagel

Elaine E. Von Hagel

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

**ILLINOIS TEACHER**

Division of Home Economics Education
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign
Illinois 61820

College of Education

Department of Vocational and Technical Education

333-2736

September 23, 1985

Entertainment Industries Council
12720 Burbank Bldg.
Suite 328
North HOllywood, CA 91607

Dear Sirs & Mesdames:

I am writing to ask your help in saving lives now destroyed by drunk drivers. If you depict alcohol and drug use in films or other entertainment, please show its consequences and don't depict it as fun or funny. Also, consumers need a substance abuse code (SA) on such entertainment so that we can decide whether we want to see or have our children see it if it is depicted as humorous and fun.

Thank you for giving this your serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Hazel Taylor Spitze
Professor and Editor

HTS/nlh

Entertainment Industries Council
12720 Burbank Boulevard
Suite 328
North Hollywood, CA. 91607

To whom it may concern:

I am voicing my opinion that films showing misuse or abuse of alcohol and/or drugs, should carry an S A code.

I feel parents need this additional information on films that may have substance abuse depicted, without showing the consequences of such acts. The tragedy of many of such films is that they are aimed at youthful audiences, and portray substance abuse as fun or in a humorous light. We as parents know that there is NO fun to it.

Please help to enforce this badly needed code on future films.

Thank you,

Phyllis Vanhuyse
Rt. 2 - 109 Town Ct.
Platte City, Mo. 64079

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The William Paterson College of New Jersey
300 Pompton Road
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

(201) 595-2175

September 25, 1985

Entertainment Industries Council
12720 Burbank Boulevard
North Hollywood,California
91607

Dear Sirs:

I am writing you to support the new SA (substance abuse) code rating system.

As a Mother Against Drunk Driving, and as a concerned citizen, I am concerned with the multi-billion dollar motion picture industry's depiction of the "cool" attitude toward toward alcohol and drug misuse and abuse.

Living as I do in the center of New York City, I am constantly seeing burnt-out and overdosed young people (and older, of course) just sleeping it off on the streets.

It does seem to me that a conscientious film industry would see to it that this innovative coding concept could become a reality.

We look forward to seeing the SA code enforced as soon as possible. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Gregg Mayer

(Ms) Gregg Mayer
P.R. Coordinator

Susan K. von Roedern
13576 W. 22nd Place
Golden, Colorado 80401

To Whom It May Concern —

I strongly and sincerely support the use of a 'Substance Abuse' coding for motion-picture ratings. Our children learn what we teach them and I don't want to be responsible for taking my child to see a film which does not express my values!

Better yet let's have more wholesome movies and less 'junk food for the mind'!

Sincerely,

Susan K. von Roedern

# S A Rating

In the multi-billion dollar motion picture industry, many popular films depict alcohol and drug misuse and abuse in their plots. Unfortunately, such films often fail to show the results of such deviant behavior. The real tragedy is that many of these widely viewed motion pictures cater to a youthful audience, portraying substance abuse as "fun" or humorous.

There is a new consciousness today among some leaders in the motion picture industry and other concerned citizens. They want to put an end to film producers' depiction of substance misuse or abuse in motion pictures.

The Motion Picture Association of America sponsors a seven-member board which administers a rating system designed to identify the level of possibly objectionable materials contained in the body of a given film, i.e., sexual behavior, violence, and language. Recently, the Caucus of Producers, Writers and Directors recommended that if substance misuse or abuse is depicted in a film without showing the consequences of such acts, the film should receive a rating consistent with ratings awarded to excessive behavior in other areas being considered.

MADD strongly supports the use of an "S A" (substance abuse) code for films which include objectional alcohol and/or drug use scenes, including driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. This additional identification code will help parents decide if they want their children to view such films, and also offers young viewers the opportunity to refrain from patronizing these movies.

This innovative concept can become a reality only if each of us voices our support for an "S A" rating. We need *your* help to make it happen!

Please take a moment to express your support for a new "S A" rating system. You can write your opinions to:

**Entertainment Industries Council**
**12720 Burbank Blvd.**
**Suite 328**
**North Hollywood, CA 91607**

Hopefully, our input will have a positive impact on the current motion picture ratings system. Your support for this effort is appreciated!

1019

**MADD**

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING
669 Airport Freeway, Suite 310
Hurst, Texas 76053

Bulk Rate
Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 87
Hurst, Texas

00285121
MR JAMES H COX
BOX 1723
KNOX ALLRIGHT INC
KNOXVILLE, TN 37901

9/25/95

I have three children and two grandchildren; I don't want them to unknowingly be exposed to such films. If a film has a "SA" rating & they chose to attend, that is a different matter.

Jim Cox

UPDATE: Tang March Across America to Benefit MADD (see Page 12)

Ms. KAMMERMAN. We were told that the Entertainment Industries Council made a formal proposal on April 8, 1985 to Mr. Valenti of the MPAA to adopt a 36-month trial run with this subcategory SA. When we spoke to Mr. Valenti, he told us that the proposal was currently pending before the policy review committee, and that is the committee that would have to endorse any change in the rating system.

We also spoke to other members of that committee, and there was some disagreement as to what proposals are on the table at this point, but I'm sure that Mr. Valenti will address that when he testifies this morning.

In any event, we spoke about the rating system with all of the people that we interviewed. Everyone seemed to give great importance to the rating system, saying that the ratings were targetted when a film was initially thought of and during the filming, as well.

They all said it was very important, and they looked for, largely, PG and PG–13 ratings, with R being the close runnerup. The G rating was thought to be not very good, because youngsters largely disdained them as being too childish for them; and the X, by definition, excludes those under 17 or 18, depending on the jurisdiction.

People within the industry largely criticized the proposal to create the subcategory SA, and again, I assume that Mr. Valenti will articulate their reasons. On the other hand, parent and religious groups seemed highly responsive to that request.

The subcommittee will hear today from Mr. Satchell, who wrote the Parade article that you alluded to. In that Parade article, the SA rating was listed and a questionnaire was included. Mr. Satchell will testify as to the response to the questionnaire, but I would request, with the chairman's permission, that the Parade article be introduced into the record, also.

Chairman ROTH. Without objection.

[A copy of the Parade article follows and is marked exhibit No. 2:]

EXHIBIT NO. 2

[From Parade magazine, July 21, 1985]

DOES HOLLYWOOD PUSH DRUGS TO KIDS?

(By Michael Satchell)

In recent months, Goldie Hawn, Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton, Lily Tomlin and JoBeth Williams have been shown smoking marijuana in millions of American homes. They have done it, of course, on television in the motion picture hits *Private Benjamin, Nine to Five* and *Poltergeist*, screened during prime time by the CBS and ABC networks. The scenes depicting these stars giggling their way through a marijuana high were viewed by millions of young children and teenagers whose parents presumably frown on their emulating such activity.

Such depiction of drug-taking as normal and enjoyable angers a growing force of observers concerned with substance abuse by teenagers.

Critics interviewed by Parade from Beverly Hills to Capitol Hill believe that Hollywood too often glamorizes drugs and alcohol and thus encourages their use among young people. They have launched a campaign to change the way drug use is portrayed on the screen and handled by the movie ratings system. They hope to persuade writers, producers, directors, actors and studio executives to show the problems drugs really cause.

They also want the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings board to add the letters "SA"—a "Substance Abuse" warning—to a PG, PG–13 or R designation to inform parents when movies glorify drugs.

Three concerned organizations are leading the effort: the Scott Newman Center, founded and endowed by the actor Paul Newman and friends following the death of his son from a mixture of alcohol and drugs; the Entertainment Industries Council, a nonprofit group formed to combat favorable drug messages in the entertainment media; and The Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors, with 165 members.

Reaction so far has been lukewarm.

"Drug use is so socially acceptable—there's a hipness, a cachet," points out Susan Kendall Newman, director of special projects at the Scott Newman Center, based in Los Angeles. "God forbid that you have a party in this town and you don't put out some good pot and some good coke."

Miss Newman, oldest of the actor's five daughters, notes that, since becoming publicly identified with the anti-drug programs of the center, she is "not invited to the A-list parties anymore—I'm beginning to be shunned." She adds, "We've been talking with major people in charge of the studios and television, and their support has not been forthcoming except at the most superficial level. They don't think there is a problem. We felt out the MPAA, and we were met with tremendous resistance. The support just wasn't there."

The issue has attracted the attention of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. In March, the subcommittee held hearings on Capitol Hill to examine the role of television in glamorizing drugs. It plans additional hearings on movies and rock music. The prospect of government investigators poking around Hollywood has raised serious questions. Apprehension about a return to the witch-hunts and blacklists of the anti-Communist era is coupled with fears of censorship and an attack on the First Amendment—fears that supporters of the campaign insist are groundless.

"We're very sensitive about the First Amendment," says Sen. William V. Roth Jr. (R., Del.), chairman of the subcommittee. "We're not holding the threat of censorship—that's unacceptable and reprehensible. We're looking to encourage those in the movie industry to join us in the fight against drug abuse. Movie stars are great role models for young people—movies are a glamour industry—and when drugs are shown in a favorable light, it has a very real impact.

"There are going to be some who oppose our goals, and I agree we're in an extremely sensitive area here. But public hearings are part of the investigative process, and I hope Hollywood will cooperate."

The possibility of regulations disturbs Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America. "I don't want the government telling us what we can show on the screen," he says. "That's mine-infested terrain. They do that very well in the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other police dictatorships."

Prior to the mid-1960s, movie characters who used drugs were portrayed as junkies, hopheads and losers—Frank Sinatra's *The Man With the Golden Arm* is probably the best example. Outside of blues and folk standards, music was free of drug references.

Then the upsurge of drug usage in society that accompanied the turbulent events of the late 1960s and 1970s was mirrored in the entertainment media. The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album opened the floodgates for a tide of drug lyrics that continues to permeate rock music today.

The 1969 film *Easy Rider,* a box office smash among young people, featured cocaine, marijuana and LSD. A year later, the laid-back members of the 4077th shared joints in the football game at the climax of the movie *M*A*S*H.* It wasn't long before drugs crept onto television, from Johnny Carson's wisecracks to *Saturday Night Live,* where drug humor became a staple.

Today, network television has virtually eliminated positive drug references from its programming and has produced numerous dramas and series whose themes carry strong anti-drug messages. But, at the same time, the networks continue to screen motion pictures with drug sequences—even though they edit out obscenity, graphic violence, nudity and explicit sexual content. Cable television, on the other hand, rarely edits anything.

Just how pervasive drug references are in today's films is difficult to assess, but informed observers believe it is increasing. "We think it's a serious, serious problem," says Dr. Keith Schuchard, co-founder of PRIDE (Parent Resources Institute for Drug Education), a national group opposed to drug abuse. "The message is that drugs are casual, normal and inevitable."

How many "drug favorable" movies are there? PARADE was able to pinpoint 60 major films, most produced in the last five years, that fall into this category.

By contrast, few films with clear anti-drug sequences or messages could be identified. Among them were *Lady Sings the Blues,* Diana Ross' portrayal of Billie Holiday; *The French Connection,* Gene Hackman's police thriller, and its sequel; *Atlantic City,* with Burt Lancaster as an old man whose life is changed when he becomes entwined in a cocaine deal; *Fort Apache, The Bronx,* where cop Paul Newman's girlfriend becomes addicted to heroin; *The Rose,* Bette Midler's disguised version of the Janis Joplin story; *Valley of the Dolls,* featuring abuse of pills; and two Al Pacino films, *The Panic in Needle Park* and *Scarface,* which explore the horrors of addiction through the experiences of an addict and a dealer.

In the 60 films that imply drug endorsement, most show marijuana smoking, although virtually every other illegal drug is displayed except heroin—which is always depicted negatively. Some, like *Private Benjamin, Nine to Five* and *Poltergeist,* were major hits. *Terms of Endearment,* in which Debra Winger smokes marijuana with a girlfriend on the eve of her wedding, won five Academy Awards in 1983, including Best Picture. Others include *Silkwood, Romancing the Stone, 10, Klute, North Dallas Forty, American Gigolo, Shampoo, The Big Chill, 48 Hours, Trading Places* and *Sharky's Machine.*

Many of the movies aimed at the youth market depict heavy drinking and pot smoking as inevitable rites of passage—films like *Footloose, Risky Business, Revenge of the Nerds, 16 Candles, Caddyshack, Fast Times at Ridgemont High, National Lampoon's Class Reunion* and *National Lampoon's Animal House.*

In this year's crop of box-office hits, Cher smokes marijuana, snorts cocaine and takes pills in *Mask;* Madonna offers a joint to an uptight character in *Desperately Seeking Susan;* and high school kids smoke pot to help break down social barriers and shyness in *The Breakfast Club.*

Some movies draw the particular ire of critics. *Poltergeist,* which is rated PG, upsets many because the writer-producer Steven Spielberg—who refused to discuss the issue with PARADE—is strongly identified with family-oriented films like *E.T.,* and the drug scene caught many parents by surprise. The most insidious films, by common agreement, are the five Cheech and Chong movies, which show the comedy duo floating through a variety of drug-related adventures in a constant haze of marijuana smoke. Richard (Cheech) Marin also refused to discuss the issue with PARADE.

Veteran 20th Century-Fox producer Renee Valente is president of the Producers Guild and a director of the Entertainment Industries Council, formed last year to combat messages that condone drugs in entertainment programs. Hollywood, she says, has insulated itself from the effects of its treatment of substance abuse. In April, the council formally petitioned Jack Valenti, the MPAA president, and Richard D. Heffner, the ratings chairman, to consider a three-year trial of the "SA" warning for offending films.

"This has nothing to do with censorship, nothing to do with creative control," says Brian Dyak, the council's president. "Moviemakers can still show anything they want. It just means adding a simple SA advisory for parents."

Valenti, who initiated the ratings system 16 years ago, disagrees. "I don't know of a single film where drugs are glamorized—there is no glamorization," he insists. "Is the simple use of marijuana gratuitous? And what is gratuitous? To me, drugs are things like heroin and cocaine. I'll wager marijuana is used by half the people on Capitol Hill and Wall Street . . . Yuppies are the biggest users of pot."

Valenti ridiculed the proposed SA addition to the ratings sytem. "I thought it stood for sex appeal," he joked. He said it would be unworkable:

"I've had contacts from all kinds of pressure groups—anti-abortion, cruelty to animals, teenage violence, teenage suicide, drunk driving—and they all want some kind of addition. It would be ludicrous and absurd. The rating system is very fragile—it can't handle all these and survive. SA would open a Pandora's box. We're already warning parents with our present ratings—they should see films before allowing their children to view them."

Valenti feels any changes should come voluntarily from within the creative ranks of moviemakers. "I'm in favor of this movement," he adds, "and I'm eager to cooperate."

Heffner, the MPAA ratings chief, agrees but cautions: "I will never accept the role of censor. I'm not going to use the ratings as an instrument of pressure. Are we getting signals that reflect the majority of parental attitudes on drug abuse? The answer is no. If parental attitudes were strong enough and communicated to us, a movie that showed pot smoking could be rated X. Where are the parents?"

## Paul Newman: "It's an Epidemic"

"Take a moment to think what our children's environment would be like if radio stations decided not to play records with pro-drug messages, if movie studios refused to distribute pictures with gratuitous drug scenes, and if television networks declined to air programs with casual and flippant remarks about drugs."

The speaker is Paul Newman. When he talks about drug abuse, it's from the perspective of a parent who has lost a child to what he calls "the insidious killer of our best and brightest."

Scott Newman, the actor's son by his first wife, Jacqueline Witte, died Nov. 20, 1978, at age 28, after mixing alcohol and Valium.

At his Westport, Conn., home, Newman spoke—passionately at times—about Hollywood's depiction of drugs. I told him of putting together a list of 60 films with positive drug messages, and he asked to hear it.

"Phew! It's an epidemic, isn't it!" he exclaimed. "I'm frankly shocked and surprised, because most of those films were made in the last couple of years . . . damn . . . I wonder how much of this is sensationalism or whether they're subconsciously dealing with the drug situation as if there's no problem and they don't recognize their own responsibilities. I think some people are irresponsible, some people are unconscious, and some just don't care."

To demonstrate his concern on the drug issue, Newman appeared at a Congressional hearing on March 20, when his daughter Susan testified during an inquiry into television's role in glamorizing substance abuse.

Newman, however, is uneasy about the government's shadow looming over Hollywood. "It's dangerous," he said. "It's something government should not be involved with. The fact they are getting involved is an admission that we can't police ourselves. It will be an evolving process, but I think we will because we have to. I think you can bring some pressure to bear on the major studios to avoid it when they can."

Asked if he supported an addition to the ratings system to warn of "drug favorable" films, he said: "I can live with that."

The Scott Newman Center was founded by the family four years ago. Among its goals are reshaping media's treatment of drugs and reaching youngsters before they become involved. It produces educational films, advises moviemakers and backs an awards program for TV writers, producers and directors who accurately depict substance abuse.

The center recently was affiliated with the University of Southern California, and Paul Newman donated $1.2 million for operating expenses and to endow an academic chair in the School of Pharmacy. "I think people look at drug abuse and think problems of this size are unmanageable," Newman said. "I don't buy that. This effort is worth it."


ARE YOU FOR RATINGS ON DRUGS?

Should the Motion Picture Association of America add an SA (Substance Abuse) warning to movies that show gratuitous drug abuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Should movies that favorably depict illegal drug use be rated X?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Mail to: Parade Magazine, Box 3954, New York, N.Y. 10163. We will send the results to Jack Valenti.

Ms. KAMMERMAN. While the inustry executives and people within the industry criticized the SA proposal, we found virtually none of them who can articulate any opposition to the publication of the rating board's reasons for its rating. When the rating board decides that a movie is PG or PG–13 based on a certain sequence in the movies, no one opposed providing that information, making it available, either to the theater or to the newspapers. None of the industry executives objected also to the proposal by the Entertainment Industry Council that drugs be considered very seriously, as seriously as the other categories of things.

That brings me to the rating board. Let me explain how it works. The rating board is composed of seven people, including its chairman, Mr. Richard Heffner, who will also testify later today. We interviewed the two most senior members of the board, a third member, and Mr. Heffner. Most of the time, the six members meet in California. They view a movie, they discuss why the movie should be rated within a certain category; and then they fill out a ballot.

Attached to my written testimony is the rating ballot which they use, and with the chairman's permission, I would introduce that into the record, as well at this time.

Chairman ROTH. So ordered.

[A copy of the rating ballot follows and is marked exhibit No. 3:]

EXHIBIT NO. 3

E OF FILM _____

E OF RATER _____ SCREENING DATE _____

EF SUMMARY OF THE FILM'S CONTENT _____

YOUR OPINION, WILL MOST PARENTS FEEL THAT:

☐ NO RESTRICTIONS NEED BE APPLIED TO THIS FILM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 17.

☐ RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THIS FILM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 17.

A. ABOVE, WILL MOST PARENTS CONSIDER THE FILM'S MOST APPROPRIATE RATING TO BE:

G -- PG -- PG-13

B. ABOVE, WILL MOST PARENTS CONSIDER THIS FILM'S MORE APPROPRIATE RATING TO BE:

R -- X

REASONS FOR OVER-ALL RATING

JECT OR THEME: G -- PG -- PG-13 _____

ATMENT

SEX AND/OR NUDITY: G -- PG -- PG-13 -- R -- X _____

LANGUAGE: G -- PG -- PG-13 -- R -- X _____

VIOLENCE: G -- PG -- PG-13 -- R -- X _____

OTHER: G -- PG -- PG-13 -- R -- X _____

AS A GUIDE TO PARENTS, PLEASE BRIEFLY BUT ADEQUATELY COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

IS FILM IS RATED _____ FOR _____

Ms. KAMMERMAN. As you can see, when the rating board members fill out the ballot, they decide what the rating should be based on subject or theme, and also based on treatment. Now, treatment is divided into four categories, sex and nudity, language, violence, and a fourth category, other.

Drugs are not listed specifically on the rating ballot, although all of the members on the rating board told us that drugs are seriously considered during the rating consideration. Once the ballots are cast and a majority polls in a certain way, there is a decision as to what the rating will be.

Informally, one of the two senior members of the rating board calls up the producer or distributor who submitted the film and explains what the rating will be. If the producer or distributor is satisfied, the movie is rated and things proceed. If the producer or distributor is not satisfied, he or she can edit the film. On that score, they get informal advice from the rating board as to why the film was rated in a certain way and what might be done to achieve a different rating. Or the producer or distributor can take an appeal to the appellate board about which Mr. Valenti will talk to you. While the rating board members told us that they consider drugs, they also told us that there was no specific rule on drugs other than one simple one which is: any use of drugs takes a film automatically out of the category G, for general, which, as I said earlier, was a category that most producers or distributors don't want anyway.

We have put together a montage of drug scenes from recent movies. These movies have been rated PG and PG–13. As you will see, the scenes depict drugs humorously, supporting the claim that feature films can and do make fun of drugs and show them as being harmless. There are six films by a variety of companies, all produced within the last 5 years.

[At this time, videotape clips were shown to the subcommittee of the following films: "Terms of Endearment," "Footloose," "Poltergeist," "Romancing the Stone," "Desperately Seeking Susan," and "Nine to Five." At this point, Senator Gore entered the hearing room.]

Ms. KAMMERMAN. We also have a few scenes from movies that are rated R that were apparently aimed at a more youthful audience.

[At this point, Senator Gore withdrew from the hearing room.]

Ms. KAMMERMAN. This is "Risky Business."

This is Cheech and Chong's "Nice Dreams."

[At this point, Senator Stevens entered the hearing room.]

Ms. KAMMERMAN. "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." That was edited for language.

Back to the rating board. All of the members of the rating board said it would be very difficult to create any standard other than an absolute one for the consideration of drug content. They do not want the responsibility for determining what are the negative consequences that the EIC resolution calls for. What they say would be more manageable and more fairly administered would be some automatic rule such as—any treatment of drugs should result in a specific category.

All of the members are parents, because that is one of the conditions for their employment, and all of the members of the rating board favored the release of information about the reasons for the rating. They all said, simply, that there would be no problem with their conducting their duties and the release of the information.

Some newspapers currently publish short descriptions of movie content, including drug use. They do that as a public service to their customers. The Army and the Air Force and the Navy do so, as well.

Since the rating board does not make its reasons available to the public, the information contained in these papers is the result of guesswork. We contacted a number of critics and editors, including Vincent Canby of the New York Times and Charles Champlin of the Los Angeles Times, and they acknowledged that they were merely guessing at the reasons for the ratings. They all said that they would welcome the information from the rating board because having that would free them up to do the jobs they're hired to do, which is to critize the films.

We also spoke with a number of editors, including those from Gannett Newspaper, Intercontinental Media Service, and Newhouse News Service, all of which publish syndicated movie reviews in newspapers throughout the country, and they said that they would publish the reasons for the ratings if could get hold of them. Several commentators and newspapers have endorsed the proposals to publish the rating board's reasons.

In 1981, the MPAA conducted an experiment in the Midwest, in Kansas and Missouri. The experiment involved the publication of two things. Well, what happened was the rating board provided information and made it available to the public, and sometimes it was published, and sometimes just the phone number for the theaters was published. The MPAA tried this for a few months and apparently concluded that it was unsuccessful and ended the experiment.

I would introduce at this time a survey and information that the rating board made available at that time in the record with the Chairman's permission.

Chairman ROTH. Without objection.

[The material referred to follows and is marked exhibit No. 4:]

EXHIBIT NO. 4

CLASSIFICATION AND RATING ADMINISTRATION

Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.

Received by Subcommittee on Investigations
OCT 22 1985

... Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036
212-840-6161

January 25, 1982

8480 Beverly Boulevard
Hollywood, California 90048
213-653-1200

(847/684) KNEE&/SIDECURL RATING EXPLANATION EXPERIMENT

The following feature-length motion pictures have been reviewed and rated by the Classification and Rating Administration pursuant to the Motion Picture Classification and Rating Program.

Each of the designated ratings is defined as follows under the Motion Picture Classification and Rating Program.

G: GENERAL AUDIENCES. All ages admitted.

PG: PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED. Some material may not be suitable for children.

R: RESTRICTED: Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

X: NO ONE UNDER 17 ADMITTED. (Age limit may vary in certain areas.)

| Title | Distributor | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| XOXO JACKD - this picture is rated R because of language; sexuality. | Quartet/Films, Inc. | R |
| [illegible] F - this picture is rated R because of language; sexuality; drug use. | New World Pictures, Inc. | R |
| DIRTY DIAPERS - this picture is rated R because of language; sexuality. | Quartet/Films, Inc. | R |
| [illegible] - this picture is rated R because of sexuality; language; violence. | 21st Century Distribution Corp. | R |
| THE LACHMAKER - this picture is rated R because of sexuality; language. | Cassent/New Yorker Films | R |
| (*)MISSING - this picture is rated PG because of language; moderate violence. | Universal Pictures | PG |
| MUTANT - this picture is rated R because of violence; sexuality. | New World Pictures, Inc. | R |
| THE SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE - this picture is rated R because of violence; sexuality. | New World Pictures, Inc. | R |
| (**)THIS TIME FOREVER - this picture is rated PG because of language; mild sexuality. | Levy Film Distributors | PG |

(*)The original R rating on Bulletin 679 has been changed by the Appeals Board to PG on 1/14/82.

(**)The original R rating on Bulletin 683 has been changed by the Appeals Board to PG on 1/21/82.

# CLASSIFICATION AND RATING ADMINISTRATION

Motion Picture Association
of America, Inc.

521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036
212-840-6161

8480 Beverly Boulevard
Hollywood, California 90048
213-653-1200

March 23, 1981

(81/640) KANSAS/MISSOURI RATING EXPLANATION EXPEDIENT

The following feature-length motion pictures have been reviewed and rated by the Classification and Rating Administration pursuant to the Motion Picture Classification and Rating Program.

Each of the designated ratings is defined as follows under the Motion Picture Classification and Rating Program.

G: GENERAL AUDIENCES. All ages admitted.

PG: PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED. Some material may not be suitable for children.

R: RESTRICTED: Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

X: NO ONE UNDER 17 ADMITTED. (Age limit may vary in certain areas.)

| Title | Distributor | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| ATLANTIC CITY - this picture is rated R because of language; violence; use of drugs. | Paramount Pictures Corp. | R |
| THE BURNING - this picture is rated R because of violence; language; sexuality. | Filmways Pictures, Inc. | R |
| DEER HUNT - this picture is rated R because of violence; language. | Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp. | R |
| EYE OF THE NEEDLE - this picture is rated R because of violence; sensuality; language. | United Artists Corp. | R |
| FACE WITH TWO LEFT FEET - this picture is rated PG because of mild language. | Tommy-J Productions, DBA Producer's Distribution Co. | PG |
| FALL LINE | United Artists Corp. | G |
| PINK RINK | United Artists Corp. | G |
| SAVAGE HARVEST - this picture is rated PG because of wildlife violence; language. | Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp. | PG |
| THE BOAT - this picture is rated X because of explicit sex; language. | Film Makers Company | X |

| Title | Distributor | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| ...ONCE A TIME - this picture is rated PG because of mild language; violence. | Universal Pictures | PG |
| ...SHIELDING SENSORS - this picture is rated R because of sensuality. | SFC Films Inc. | R |
| ...OUR THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT - this picture is rated PG because of language; sensuality. | Avco Embassy Pictures | PG |
| ...KING, WILD AND WONDERFUL - this picture is rated X because of explicit sexy language. | Gail Film Distribution | X |

1 Short Subject.

INTER-OFFICE MEMO

To Jack Valenti

Date October 21, 1981

From Robert A. Franklin

Subject: Kansas/Missouri Experiment

cc: C. Johnson
R. Haffner
S. Scott
W. Nix
J. O'Brien

General

During late September and early October, Opinion Research Corporation interviewed 1,065 parents with children between the ages of 5 and 17 living at home. These telephone interviews were conducted within the metropolitan areas of Kansas City (MO & KS), Wichita, Springfield, Joplin, Columbia, Topeka, St. Joseph, and Salina. In order to more properly mirror the market surveyed, statistical weights were applied to Sex and to Geographic location.

Findings

1) Two-thirds (67%) of the parents interviewed were aware of the rating system, when asked, "As you may know the motion picture industry uses a rating system with the symbols G, PG, R and X. Have you seen or heard anything about this rating system in the past six months?". Awareness appears to be relatively consistant across all demographic characteristics.

2) Parents strongly feel that they control the films that their children see, with 80% stating they have control over the final decision.

3) In spite of the efforts of the industry, only 10% of the parents (on an unaided basis) claimed to be aware of Something New in the rating system.

4) However, perhaps a better measure of whether parents felt something new exists in the rating system is the fact that 26% of the "aware" parents Have obtained an explanation of the reason for a film's rating. This action was strongest among white collar office workers, and in upper income groups.

INTER-OFFICE MEMO

To Jack Valenti Date Oct. 21, 1981

From R. A. Franklin



5) The prime reasons for obtaining an explanation of a film's rating were: To Assist In Decision Making (25%), To Evaluate Movie's Content (24%), Parental Concern For Children (19%), and To Determine Specific Objections To Movie's Content (19%).

6) Newspapers were, by far, the source most used to obtain an explanation of the reason for the film's rating (59%). This, of course, includes a playback of the publicity and interview stories carried by the various local papers. 21% of those parents seeking information report calling movie theatres.

7) Among the parents who obtained an explanation of the rating system, there is no doubt that they find it helpful. 91% of these people rated the system Very/Somewhat Helpful. Expressed in a different manner, on a four-point rating scale, the added explanation achieved a value of 3.392.

And, among parents with children between the ages of 5 and 11; 95% rated this added explanation positively, or a value of 3.427. In larger cities, the figure was 3.408. In smaller towns, 3.349.

To Jack Valenti Date Oct. 21, 1983

From E. A. Franklin

Page 3. (cont.)

8) When these same parents were asked, "Would you say that providing additional information about ratings is an excellent idea, a good idea, a fair idea, or a poor idea?", 93% felt that the concept was Excellent or Good. On this four-point rating scale, the concept attained a value of 3.443 overall, 3.480 among parents with children 5-11 years old, 3.481 in larger cities, and 3.310 in smaller cities.

9) Of those people who obtained an explanation of the rating system, 64% stated that said explanation affected the number of movies their children went to see during the past six months. This was more prevalent among Female parents (77%), parents who had completed high school (78%), and those employed part-time (82%).

10) Parents used the expanded explanation as a means of limiting the number of films their children could see, 69% stating their children had seen fewer films - 73% in smaller cities, and 79% among families with children between the ages of 12 and 17.

11) Of those parents who had not seen or heard something about the expanded rating system, almost half (48%), on an aided/prompted basis, acknowledged some awareness of this experiment.

12) Among these parents, the likelihood of using this system was put at a positive level of 66%, or 2.809 on a four-point rating scale.

Conclusions

Given the fact that parents feel that they have almost absolute control over the films that their children see, and state that the expanded rating system is a solid concept, there is every reason to believe that the system would meet wide acceptance on a national basis.

Since the quality of our message was good, but the quantity of our reach not up to our expectations, in order for this concept to become firmly entrenched in the minds of parents, and for these parents to put this tool to everyday use, considerable time, effort, and money would have to be devoted to marketing it ... certainly even more than was done in Kansas/Missouri.

Since there is every reason to believe that, on a national basis, parents will use this information to attempt to restrict their childrens' theatre attendance, an effort would need to be mounted pointing up the positive value of directing children to G and PG rated films.

Every good research study begets still another. The question left unanswered is, to what extent does the wording of a rating's description influence parental approval/disapproval? Consequently, given various ways to state the same message, which statement will produce a positive response from parents, while properly informing them of the film's content?

Ms. KAMMERMAN. Theater owners also, I would say, favored the publication of the reasons for the rating. We will hear testimony this morning from the theater owners, as well.

That concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman, unless you have any further questions.

[Ms. Kammerman's prepared statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF BARBARA KAMMERMAN

STAFF COUNSEL

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

In an effort to determine what, if anything, the feature film industry is doing to deglamorize drugs, staff interviewed writers, directors, producers, distributors and exhibitors. We also talked to representatives of Action and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the two government offices most actively marshalling the film industry's resources in the war on drugs, and we interviewed parent and religious groups as well.

Executives of the major film production companies all said they were interested in the issue of drug abuse. Many are themselves parents and concerned that drug use not be glamorized. All explained that while the companies have no formal policies, they consider drug use when deciding to purchase films and also during the filming.

None of the companies had a firm policy concerning public service announcements though all had made short public interest messages on one subject or another. The companies seemed responsive to requests by Action, NIDA and others. The companies did not know much about what others were doing.

The theatre owners seemed likewise responsive to requests. Although none had policies about showing short public service announcements in their theatres, all had shown some when requested to do so.

The industry as a whole has taken an interest in drug abuse. We learned of specific industry-wide projects, but I am sure that Mr. Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America will testify more about what the industry is doing.

While company executives and parent organizations both deplore drug use and its glamorization in films, the two groups disagree on how drugs are currently treated in films. The National Federation of Parents for a Drug Free Youth, an organization started in 1981 and currently boasting some 8,000 member groups, is dedicated to the prevention of drug use and abuse through education. It provided the Subcommittee with the names of 60 movies which it says show drug use without negative consequences. The parent groups, (NFP, Families in Action, and other parent groups) want two things: to raise the consciousness of those in the industry so that they will not create glamorous images or otherwise endorse drug use and to inform parents about the drug content of films so that parents can better decide which films their children should see.

During the course of the investigation, the subject of the rating system arose repeatedly. Unlike the television industry, the feature film industry is not a monolithic organization. At the March 20, 1985 hearing before this Subcommittee, Larry Stewart of the Entertainment Industries Council (also a member of the Caucus of Producers, Writers and Directors), noted that those who seek to distribute films in this country must submit to one authority -- the Movie Rating Board which, under the auspices of the Motion Picture Association of America rates all movies that subscribe to its rules. (We learned from MPAA and the National Association of Theatre Owners that virtually all films that are widely

distributed in this country submit to the system which labels films as G, PG, PG-13, R and X.)

At that hearing, Mr. Stewart announced the intention of the EIC and the Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors to endorse certain changes in the rating system that would sensitize the industry and better inform parents about the drug content of films. On April 8, 1985 the EIC submitted a proposal to the MPAA to adopt, for a 36-month trial run, a sub-category of "SA" for substance abuse. The EIC proposal also endorsed "the inclusion of specific criteria in the movies rating review process which takes into consideration the depiction of substance abuse without negative consequences."

We were told by Mr. Valenti that the Policy Review Committee of the Classification and Rating Administration would have to adopt such a change and that the Committee was considering these and other proposals to change the rating system. (There is a disagreement among members of the Committee as to whether any such proposal is presently on the table. I expect Mr. Valenti will comment on the status of the proposals.)

In any event, staff questioned all the people interviewed about the various proposals to change the rating system. Everyone involved in the making of films acknowledged that the rating is considered before purchasing a film, during filming, and upon completion when the film is submitted for a rating. Most acknowledge that they aim for a specific rating. It seems PG and PG 13 are the most sought after ratings with R a close runner-up. Most people don't want a G (kids think such films are too juvenile for them) or an X (which excludes a large

number of prospective customers. However, these same people also state that a popular film will be successful whatever the rating. For example, this year, the greatest box office successes have been "Rambo", rated R, and "Back to the Future," rated PG 13.

People within the industry criticized the "SA" proposal on several grounds, which I understand Mr. Valenti will discuss today. On the other hand, parent and religious groups have widely endorsed it. The Subcommittee will hear from three groups as well as Mike Satchell who will report on the results of a Parade Magazine survey on the proposal. In addition, the S.A. proposal has been endorsed by the National Federation of Parents for a Drug-Free Youth (NFP), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the American Association of School Administrators, and most of the groups of the National Coalition for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse including 4-H Clubs, Quest National Center, Rotary International, Lions Club International, the Association of Junior Leagues and some other organizations). At this point, with the Chairman's permission, I would introduce into the hearing record a copy of the Parade article containing the survey.

Virtually none of the industry executives who found fault with the S.A. proposal objected to the publication -- either in newspapers or in the theatres — of the reasons for the rating, provided that information were made available. Nor did the industry executives object to Mr. Stewart's and the EIC's proposal that the system more specifically consider substance abuse, consistently with ratings for violence and sex.

There are seven members of the Rating Board, including its Chairman, Richard Heffner, who will testify later this morning. Staff interviewed Mr. Heffner as well as three members of the Rating Board, including the two most senior members. The members of the board explained how they rate a film. They view the film, then discuss why the film should be rated within a certain category, then list their reasons for their rating on their rating ballot. Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would introduce at this time a copy of the rating ballot used. As you can see from the ballot, the members are requested to discuss the film's content, and under a section called "Reasons for Overall Rating," the following categories are listed: "Subject of Theme" and "Treatment." Under "Treatment," four categories are listed: Sex and/or Nudity; Language, Violence, and Other. There is no mention of drugs on the ballot. Once the Board decides on a rating, one of the two most senior members of the Board informally notifies the producer or distributor of the likely rating. If asked, the member of the Board will explain why the film is rated in a certain category and may give an advisory opinion as to what the producer or distributor could do to achieve a different rating.

The three Board members and Mr. Heffner all concurred that drugs are currently considered. They maintain that drugs are encompassed in the "other" category on their rating ballot. They all explained that while there is no specific rule on how to deal with drug use or abuse, there is an unwritten rule that any use of drugs automatically takes the film out of the G category.

Staff explained to the Rating Board members that none of the producers or distributors we interviewed recalled having been informed that a change in a drug scene would affect a change in the rating. Neither of the two Rating Board

members who were in contact with film-makers nor Mr. Heffner were surprised by this since none recalled having told anyone that a particular drug scene was the cause of the rating. All explained, however, that where drugs are involved in a film, there are often other things such as sex or violence that would affect the rating and be the subject of discussion.

The MPAA has informed the Subcommittee that between July 1984 (when PG 13 was first created) and September, 1985, 61 films have been rated PG-13 and of them, 12 contain rating ballots in which drugs were mentioned; 15 out of 101 films rated PG contained ballots mentioning drugs.

We have put together a montage of drug scenes from recent movies rated PG and PG-13. As you will see, these scenes depict drug usage in a humorous light -- supporting the claim that feature films portray drugs as fun and harmless. You will see drugs consumed in a family environment in Steven Spielberg's "Poltergest" and by the teenage idol, Madonna in "Desperately seeking Susan." With the Chairman's permission, I will show the scenes at this time.

| Title | Producer | Rating | Year Released |
|---|---|---|---|
| Terms of Endearment | Paramount/ Pictures Corp. | PG | 1983 |
| Footloose | Paramount Pictures Corp. | PG | 1984 |
| Poltergeist | MGM Film Co. | PG | 1982 |
| Romancing the Stone | 20th Century Fox Film | PG | 1984 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Desperately Seeking Susan | Orion Pictures Corp. | PG-13 | 1985 |
| Nine to Five | 20th Century Fox Film | PG | 1980 |

We also have a few scenes from films that while rated R were apparently aimed at and popular among youthful audiences.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Risky Business | Warner Bros. | R | 1983 |
| Cheech and Chong's Nice Dreams | Columbia Pictures Pictures Industry | R | 1981 |
| Fast Times at Ridgemont High | Universal City Studio, Inc. | R | 1982 |

All of the members of the Rating Board interviewed asserted that it would be difficult to create an objective standard for making drugs count more in a film rating. They could apply an automatic rule, such as -- any use of drugs requires a certain rating. But, they would have difficulty deciding when drugs were used "without negative consequences," because all thought "negative consequences" too vague. All of the Board members, as parents, favored release of information to the public about the reasons for the rating and none thought this would create untenable problems for them in their work on the Rating Board.

Some newspapers now publish short descriptions of movie content, including drug use, as a public service to their readers. (The Army and Air Force similarly write short descriptions of film content, including drug use, to warn parents.) Since the Rating Board does not make public its reasons, these descriptions are guesses about why films are rated. Interestly, the Navy refuses to purchase films that glamorize drug content. The Army and Air Force do not have such a policy.

We contacted a number of film critics and their editors. The critics who write short descriptions, including Vincent Canby of the New York Times and Charles Champlin of the Los Angeles Times, all said they merely guessed at the explanations and would welcome the receipt of information from the Rating Board both because their readers want the information and because it would free them up to concentrate on watching the film critically.

The editors, including Gannett News Service, Intercontinental Media Service, and Newhouse News Service (all of which syndicate film reviews), said they would publish the Rating Board's reasons. Several commentators and newspapers have endorsed the proposal to publish the Rating Board's reasons.

Several theatre owners favored this proposal. Theatre owners sometimes purchase and advertise films without having seen them. This is called blind-bidding and has been banned in some states. Nevertheless, particularly in those states where it exists, theatre owners told us they would welcome the additional information from the Rating Board because it is information that their customers want. The Subcommittee will hear testimony on this issue from theatre owners.

That concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman ROTH. Senator Stevens, do you have any questions?

Senator STEVENS. No questions. Thank you, Barbara.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you very much, Bobby, for your statement.

At this time, as I indicated earlier, since Mr. Shatner has been delayed because of weather, we have changed the order of the witnesses. We call forward Michael Satchell, the associate editor of Parade magazine.

As you know, all witnesses are required to be sworn. Do you swear the testimony you will give before the subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. SATCHELL. I do.

Chairman ROTH. Welcome Mr. Satchell.

Let me just indicate that you are the associate editor of Parade magazine. Mr. Satchell has been an investigative reporter for a number of years and has recently examined the question of whether feature films promote drug use among young people.

Mr. Satchell?

## TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL SATCHELL, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, PARADE MAGAZINE

Mr. SATCHELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have submitted a long, detailed statement for the record, and all I'll do now is just touch briefly on some highlights to save some time.

As you know, I have been invited to testify to share the results of my research into the question of whether Hollywood, by the way it portrays drug usage in movies, actually encourages and glamorizes the use of drugs among young people.

I would like to preface my remarks by stating that while I'm appearing here as a journalist, I'm also the father of four teenagers, and I share, with millions of other parents, a deep concern about the destructive consequences of drug use and alcohol abuse among young people.

Over the past 20 years, along with many other journalists, I have found myself, time and time again, writing about the young lives that have disrupted, ruined, or lost as a result of drugs, an involvement that invariably began with what some call that harmless, benign drug, marijuana.

[At this point, Senator Gore entered the hearing room.]

Mr. SATCHELL. My interest in this particular issue really began last year, when I saw three films with my children: "Nine to Five," "Private Benjamin," and "Poltergeist." I was annoyed, because all three films contained scenes, as we have seen earlier, that portray drugs as a perfectly normal, average, everyday activity. These scenes, particularly the ones in the PG rated films and particularly in "Poltergeist," took me by surprise, because Poltergeist was sold as a family oriented movie.

Here, I find myself, and probably millions of other parents, completely surprised with this kind of portrayal.

Parents taking their children to see films like these, particularly films like "Poltergeist," would have no idea that children would be

watching scenes and absorbing messages that smoking pot is normal behavior. It contradicts every antidrug message that concerned parents try to instill into impressionable young minds. From here, I began wondering just how many movies show similarly positive drug messages, scenes that showed drugs as benign or cool or acceptable without the negative consequences of substance abuse.

I was particularly curious about the films that are geared specifically for teenage audiences but are not usually viewed by their parents in the theater.

With a modest investment in time and effort, I was able to identify and view 57 major motion pictures, many of them made in the past 5 years, that contain positive drug messages, but I could only locate 9 in which the overriding theme was that drugs are a negative experience. A list of these films is included with my testimony.

More time spent watching more movies would have turned up more candidates for both lists, but I think the point had been made, and I would like to emphasize that these were not obscure low-budget films that opened in a handful of locations and were quickly observed and forgotten or sold to cable. And the majority of the nearly 60 drug-positive films enjoyed considerable success at the box office, and in some cases, earned Academy Awards. Many of them are regularly screened by the television networks or on cable, and the drug scenes are invariably intact.

The depiction of drug taking in these movies ranges from subtle to blatant, and while marijuana was the most common substance used, characters are depicted enjoying a wide variety of drugs without ill effects. The single exception seems to be heroin, which was always shown with negative consequences.

Several of the films aimed primarily at the teenage and young adult audience suggest that marijuana, and for that matter, heavy drinking, are necessary components for having a good time. Getting blitzed on pot or booze is treated in these films as a sort of inevitable right of teenage passage. And this message, I think, clearly undermines the antidrug efforts of parents and the antidrug campaigns that are conducted by schools and other agencies.

Imagine the confusion in the minds of teenagers when authority figures counsel them that drugs are bad but their movie idols portray pot as being fun and cool.

I note that during my research, I interviewed some 2 dozen young people undergoing treatment for drug dependency at the Straight Program in Virginia. Straight is a nationally known residential drug treatment program for young people with a long history of drug usage. Without exception, each of these teenage patients said that drug positive films, particularly the Cheech and Chong movies, were among their favorite forms of entertainment. Some had seen the Cheech and Chong films five and six times.

I asked them why: because the films provided positive reinforcement for their own drug habits; that drugs are hip; that drugs are fun.

These films, and others carrying favorable drug messages, do carry the clear and unequivocal suggestion that getting stoned is desirable, glamorous behavior.

In Hollywood, as you are well aware, a group of concerned individuals within the industry are attempting to persuade film producers to be more responsible and balanced in the way drug use is portrayed. But mostly, I sensed an atmosphere of denial that any problem exists.

The president of the Motion Picture Association of America, whom you will hear from later, insisted to me that there was absolutely no glamorization of drugs in any movie that he had ever seen. Films depicting marijuana use were no great concern to him, because he did not consider marijuana to be a serious drug problem in our society, in part, because it was so widely used by so many people. It did not compare in seriousness to heroin or cocaine.

For someone holding such a key position in an industry that wields such enormous influence over our culture and life-style, I find that attitude to be out of touch with reality and astonishingly naive.

As the subcommittee is well aware, the Entertainment Industries Council is persuading filmmakers to be more balanced in their drug use portrayals. The council has petitioned the Motion Picture Association to try a 3-year experiment in which movies judged by the rating board to contain drug favorable scenes will carry the "substance abuse" warning along with the film's rating. In Parade's story, we decided to test public sentiment on this proposal by including a short ballot for the readers to mail in. The question was asked if the MPAA should add the SA warning to a movie to alert parents to any prodrug content. We received some 55,000 replies, and slightly over 96 percent favored the proposal.

We also asked if movies that glamorized drugs should be rated X. This question was included because Richard Heffner, the rating's board chairman, who I understand you will also hear from later today, told us that theoretically, if parental concern was strong enough over drugs and it was communicated to the ratings board, a simple potsmoking scene could earn an X rating. Once again, the reader response was overwhelmingly in favor, with 9 out of 10, 90 percent, favoring the X-rated category for offending drug movies.

While no claim is made that the Parade survey was scientifically balanced, I think the response clearly indicates the depth of public concern on this issue and the frustration that many feel over a situation in which they have little influence.

Accompanying many of those 55,000 ballots came letters applauding the effort to carry a warning, hundreds and hundreds of letters, incidentally. But many of them reflected the kind of anguish and desperation that many parents feel when they see their children being enveloped by the drug culture.

Like most parents, I have relied on the movie-rating system to guide me in my children's viewing. The younger ones, for example, are usually not allowed to see R-rated films.

With the G rating virtually extinct, PG has come to be widely regarded by the public as the standard for family viewing, yet the MPAA Ratings Board continues to put PG and PG–13 ratings on films that contain drug favorable scenes, as we saw earlier in the video tape demonstration.

Shouldn't positive drug use scenes be considered with the same standards as nudity, explicit sexual content, or bad language that invariably warrants a restricted R rating?

MPAA officials have argued that if parents are concerned or confused or worried about this issue, then they should go see the film first. This would undoubtedly boost ticket sales, but it really is impractical. I think it's a copout. A simple SA drug warning would send an immediate, clear signal to parents and allow them to make a choice over their youngster's viewing.

Much like the recent efforts of the Parents Music Resource Center to persuade record companies to put warning labels on record albums that contain patently offensive lyrics, the SA proposal is one of providing consumer information for parents and concerned individuals, and I don't think the first amendment or the question of censorship enters into it.

Finally, this issue focuses on the question of whether Hollywood's creative talents should be more responsible and balanced when they feel it necessary to portray drug usage. Movies are arguably our Nation's most persuasive art form, capable of wielding enormous influence on public opinion and behavior. At this time, in the context of the national tragedy of teenage substance use, Hollywood is presently contributing to a problem when it could quite easily become part of a solution.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you. We appreciate your being here today. Let me ask you as a first question if you come out in favor of the SA warning? Is that better than the publication of the reasons why the various movies are given a particular rating? Do you think an SA is simpler and easier to understand, or do you think it would be preferable to let the movie theaters, the critics and others have specific notice as to the reason for the classification, or would you do both?

Mr. SATCHELL. I think as a parent, Senator, the more information I can get, the better. It may be a little unwieldy to put capsules on the end of each movie review, but I think the label SA carries a clear message, just as the rating X tells the person exactly what a movie is going to depict. I think the words SA will tell the parent, apparently, "This is a film I don't want my child to see."

Chairman ROTH. You indicated that you received, I think, some 55,000 responses to your questionnaire. How does that compare with other surveys conducted by Parade? Is that a large or minimal response?

Mr. SATCHELL. The number of replies, we stopped counting at 55,000, and tabulating. We did receive several thousand more, but we stopped it at 55,000, because that is the way we broke down the tabulation.

It was quite a high response. For example, on previous stories that I have been involved with, a story in 1982 on the subject of POW's and MIA's, we solicited letters to send to the North Vietnamese and to the Laotian Embassies and the United Nations requesting information on POW's. That drew 12,000 letters, and approximately 3 years ago, a story on cruelty to animals in the movie industry, detailing how Hollywood kills and maims animals to

make movies, we, again, requested letters to be sent to the Motion Picture Association via the American Humane Association, and that drew 26,000 pieces of mail. So 55,000 we felt to be quite a good response.

Any time that you are asking someone to cut out a ballot, fill it in, put it in an envelope, stick a stamp on it, you're not giving anything away, 55,000, we felt, to be a very good response.

[At this point, Senator Gore withdrew from the hearing room.]

Chairman ROTH. So what you are really saying is that, in your opinion, even though this is not a scientific poll, that the number is significant, and as I recall, you say over 96 percent favored the so-called SA warning?

Mr. SATCHELL. Yes. We thought, based on the previous surveys, we thought it to be quite significant.

Chairman ROTH. My staff, in interviewing executives of some of the major production studios, were told that drugs are bad box office, and as a result, there has been a reduction in the number of drug scenes in films. Yet you assert that you found at least 57 films in your survey so that that seems somewhat inconsistent. Would you care to comment?

Mr. SATCHELL. Senator, I didn't look that hard for these movies. They were not hard to find. I was surprised to be able to find 57, and I spent about 2 weeks watching films. I could have found more, I'm sure, on both sides of the issue. There also would have been some that would have shown drugs in a negative light.

To answer your question specifically, I don't know how many films are produced each year, but I think there are enough major motion pictures seen by enough people to have a significant effect. Just chatting with teen agers informally and asking them about drug scenes, in movies, most of them could immediately recall specific drug scenes in the popular films that they have seen, particularly the teenage pictures, like "Breakfast Club", which is an extremely popular film this year.

In addition, I might add that marijuana is by no means the only drug depicted favorably. In the film—many films contain cocaine scenes, and in the film "Mask," a 1985 box office hit starring Cher, there is a scene in which she attends a party and is given a joint laced with PCP, or angel dust. It is an extremely deadly combination that is known to cause bizarre behavior among users. It is a frightening drug. Cher smokes this, gets high, and everything is cool. That's a 1985 film and one of the best sellers, one of the box office hits of the year.

I think to answer your question, at this time, I didn't see drugs as being bad box office. I think they're almost included as—they're just thrown in, almost, in some cases, gratuitously.

Chairman ROTH. Senator Stevens?

Senator STEVENS. Your testimony implies that you are not sure whether the PG, R and X rating systems are working. If this is the case, what would the S.A. add?

Mr. SATCHELL. The words SA would tell the viewer it would be SA for substance abuse. It would be a warning that says drugs or alcohol are used and abused or depicted in a favorable, glamorous, positive, upbeat light. When the drug—excuse me—when the film is rated either PG, PG–13, R, or X, a value judgment, a subjective

value judgment is being made at that time by the ratings board. Were the Motion Picture Association to adopt the SA system, if those reviewers or those ratings people saw that drugs were being glamorized in this film, they would add on the words, SA to the movies, and this would tell me, as a parent, that this film contains those kinds of scenes, and I would be reluctant, or I would forbid my kids to go and see a movie like that.

Senator STEVENS. My point is that the industry is saying parental guidance is required on some films. I take it that you found that there were drug-related scenes, substance abuse scenes in many that had PG.

Mr. SATCHELL. Yes.

Senator STEVENS. But did you find any films that were not rated PG where no warning was given regarding substance abuse concepts in them?

Mr. SATCHELL. Well, most drug films carry R ratings, although many do carry the PG rating. The problem with the rating system—and this is not my area, by any means—but talking to kids, the G is almost—G is almost a kiss of death to a film. PG has come to be accepted as the standard for family viewing.

Senator STEVENS. Doesn't that say that the problem is in the family, not in the industry?

Mr. SATCHELL. Yes, it does, absolutely. Parents do need to——

Senator STEVENS. I have raised five kids and I am raising another one now. It just seems to me that the problem really lies with parents knowing where their kids are as much as it is with a rating system. I'm not sure adding another series of letters is going to make much difference in terms of the deterrent effect of trying to keep kids away from these movies.

Mr. SATCHELL. I think probably, if the Motion Picture Association began treating drug usage with the same severity as explicit sexual content and raising it up to an R rating, that, I think, would probably go a long way toward solving the problem.

Senator STEVENS. I don't disagree with that, but I just don't know what another rating system is going to add.

Mr. SATCHELL. For example, take a film like "Poltergeist," which is Steven Spielberg's latest film. It is sold as a family oriented movie, and it is designed as a family picture, primarily. I don't think there is a parent in this country, after their kids had seen a film like "E.T.," that would not be happy to send their children off to see a film like "Poltergeist," and yet, I went with my children, my younger ones, at least, and found myself watching the scene that we saw earlier of mom rolling a joint in the bedroom and the parents getting high as just the average end to an average day. A kind of message I resent strongly. Had that film been rated R, I wouldn't have let my younger teenagers go and see it, or S.A.

Senator STEVENS. I see your point. But what if you go to an R rating rather than SA?

Mr. SATCHELL. That is a question probably for Mr. Heffner or Mr. Valenti. If "Poltergeist" had been rated PG with the SA warning, it would have told me that there is a drug or alcohol abuse or a positive drug message in this film, and I would have had strong reservations about letting them go to see it.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you, Mr. Satchell. We appreciate your being here today.

[Mr. Satchell's prepared statement, with attachments, follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT
OF
MICHAEL SATCHELL
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
PARADE MAGAZINE

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee: I have been invited to testify to share the results of my research into the question of whether Hollywood -- by the way it portrays drug usage in movies -- encourages and glamorizes the use of drugs among young people. This issue was the subject of a cover story in PARADE on July 21. I would like to preface my remarks by stating that while I am testifying in the role of an enquiring journalist, I am also the father of four teenagers and I share -- with millions of other parents -- a deep concern about the destructive consequences of drug use -- and alcohol abuse -- among young people.

Over the past 20 years, along with many other journalists, I have found myself -- time and time again -- chronicling the awful toll of young lives disrupted, ruined or lost because of drugs -- an involvement that invariably began with that so-called "harmless" and "benign" drug, marijuana.

My interest in this issue began last year when my family and I viewed the comedy film "Private Benjamin" starring Goldie Hawn. At one point, the heroine is depicted with her fellow soldiers sitting around in the woods, smoking marijuana, getting high, having a good time.

Soon after, we saw another comedy, "Nine to Five" featuring Jane Fonda, Lilly Tomlin and Dolly Parton. Again, this movie contained a party

scene where the three women smoke pot and get high -- with the marijuana supplied by the teenage son of one of the women.

I found myself annoyed at these scenes because they didn't really add anything to the storyline and they were obviously sending confusing messages to my younger teenagers. But the film that really annoyed me when I watched it with my children, was "Poltergeist," a PG-rated ghost story by Steven Spielberg that had been heavily promoted as a family picture. Coming from the moviemaker responsible for films like "E.T.-The Extra Terrestrial," the last thing I expected was a lengthy and explicit scene when the parents of the family featured in the film discuss the events of the day while the mother rolls a joint and smokes it.

The scenes of the parents getting high were presented as perfectly normal behaviour -- they could have been sipping wine or munching popcorn -- and they took me, and probably millions of other parents, totally by surprise. The marijuana scene did nothing to advance the story line, was totally unconnected to the movie's theme, and was gratuitous in the extreme.

To be sure, some parents do smoke pot when their kids have gone to bed and Spielberg has every right to show this in his movies although his motives in this instance totally escape me. But why was this film only rated PG, a category that is widely perceived by the public as a mark of approval for viewing by young audiences. Parents taking their children to see this film would have no idea that they would be watching a scene and absorbing a message that smoking pot is normal behaviour. It contradicts every anti-drug message that concerned parents try to instill into impressionable young minds.

I began wondering just how many movies contained similarly positive drug messages -- scenes that showed drugs as benign, fun and acceptable but without the realistic, negative results of substance abuse. I was particularly curious about the films geared specifically for teenage audiences that are rarely viewed by adults in the theatre.

With only a modest investment in time and effort, I was able to identify and view 57 major motion pictures -- many made in the past five years -- that contained positive drug messages, but I could locate only nine in which the overriding theme was that drugs are a negative experience. (A list of the films is included with this testimony.) More time spent watching more movies could certainly have turned up more candidates for both lists, but I felt the point had been made.

I would like to emphasize that these were not obscure, low budget movies that opened in a handful of locations, had little appeal and were quickly forgotten or sold to cable television as late night filler movies. The majority of the nearly 60 drug-positive films enjoyed considerable success at the box office and in some cases, earned Academy Awards. Many of them are regularly screened by the networks or on cable with the drug scenes invariably intact.

The depiction of drug taking ranges from subtle to blatant and while marijuana is the most common substance used, characters are depicted enjoying a wide variety of drugs without ill effects. The single exception is heroin which is always shown with negative consequences.

Several of the films aimed primarily at the teenage and young adult audience suggest that marijuana -- and for that matter, heavy drinking -- are necessary components for having a good time. Getting blitzed on pot or booze is treated in these films as a sort of inevitable rite of teenage passage. This message to "get high and party", I believe, clearly undermines the anti-drug efforts of parents and the anti-drug campaigns conducted by schools, and other agencies. Imagine the confusion in the minds of teenagers when authority figures counsel that drugs are bad, but their movie idols portray dope as fun and cool.

Some films contain mixed messages on drugs and this year's box-office hit "Mask" is a good example. In that film, Cher portrays a mother whose multi-drug habits eventually create a rift between her and her teenage son -- a negative consequence that is logical and realistic. But Cher's character is also shown at a party smoking a marijuana joint that has been laced with PCP or "Angel Dust," an animal tranquiliser. This extremely dangerous combination is known to cause bizarre and dangerous reactions with users, yet Cher's character smokes and enjoys this deadly combination without ill effect. Again, what kind of message does this convey to an impressionable or naive teenager -- or adult for that matter?

The most insidious drug-favorable films, I believe, are unquestionably the Cheech and Chong movies. Five of the six movies made by these comedians are blatantly and defiantly, pro-drug. The plots, the jokes, the entire substance of these movies revolves around the growing, selling and smoking of marijuana and hashish, with the goal of getting as high as possible.

Audiences for these Cheech and Chong movies are overwhelming teenagers and young adults. Print advertising for the films exploys common drug slang, encourages patrons to view the movie while they are high, and leaves no doubt as to the content. "Don't Go Straight To See This Movie"... "You Can Always Smell The Excitement In The Air,"... "They'll Have You Rollin' In Your Seats," and "Just What We All Need - A Really Good Hit" are some examples. (See attachment.)

While Cheech and Chong movies may not be familiar to many parents, I think it's worth noting that their attorney informed me that the five Cheech and Chong drug theme movies had grossed an astonishing $250 million -- clear evidence of their broad appeal.

I would also note that during research, I interviewed some two dozen young people undergoing treatment for drug dependency at the STRAIGHT program in Springfield, VA. STRAIGHT is a nationally known residential drug treatment program for young people with a long history of drug usage. Without exception, each of these patients said that Cheech and Chong films had been among their favorite forms of entertainment -- some had seen the films five and six times.

Why? Because the films provided positive reinforcement for their own drug habits... that drugs were hip, that drugs were fun.

No one is suggesting that a youngster seeing a Cheech and Chong film for the first time is going to race out and beg a joint from a friend or buy pot

from the nearest dealer. But these films -- and others carrying favorable drug messages -- do carry the clear and unequivocal suggestion that getting stoned is desirable, glamorous behaviour.

In Hollywood, a handful of concerned individuals within the industry are attempting to persuade filmmakers to be more responsible and balanced in the way drug use is portrayed, But mostly, I sensed an atmosphere of denial that any problem exists and it was difficult to find key officials who would even discuss the issue.

One of the few who did agree to be interviewed -- the president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) -- insisted that there was absolutely no glamorization of drugs in any movie he had ever seen. Films depicting marijuana use were of little concern to him because he didn't consider marijuana to be a serious drug problem in our society -- in part because it was so widely used.

For someone holding such a key position in an industry that wields such enormous influence over our culture and lifestyle, I find that attitude to be out of touch with reality and astonishingly naive.

As the Subcommittee is well aware, the Entertainment Industries Council is attempting to pursuade filmmakers to be more balanced in their drug use portrayals. EIC has also petitioned the Motion Picture Association to try a three year experiment in which movies judged by the MPAA ratings board to contain drug-favorable scenes would carry an S.A. for "substance abuse" warning along with the film's rating.

In PARADE'S July 21 story, we decided to test public sentiment on this proposal by including a short ballot for readers to mail in. Question One asked if the MPAA should add an SA warning to a movie to alert parents to any pro-drug content. Some 55,000 replies were received and slightly over 96 percent favored the proposal.

We also asked if movies that glamorized drugs should be rated X. This question was included because Richard D. Heffner, the MPAA ratings board chairman, told us theoretically that if parental concern was strong enough and was communicated to the board, a simple pot smoking scene could earn an X rating. Once again, the reader response was overwhelmingly in favor with nine out of ten readers favoring the X-rated category for offending movies.

While no claim is made that the PARADE survey was scientifically balanced, I think the response clearly indicates the depth of public concern on this issue and the frustration many feel over a situation in which they have little influence.

Accompanying many of those 55,000 ballots came letters applauding the effort to add a drug warning to movies. Some of the messages reflected the kind of anguish and despair that parents feel when they see their children being enveloped by the drug culture. One letter from the executive director of the 35,000 member National Association of Secondary School Principals captured the essence of this issue, and I would like to quote briefly from it.

"Schools are admonished by everyone from the White House to the local PTA to develop drug education programs. Such programs, of course, are ineffectual when placed against the overwhelming impact of the entertainment world.

"The glamorizing of drugs by prominent personalities in the entertainment community encourages large numbers of high school students to use drugs. These personalities are pushing the psychology of drug use. The direct and indirect messages to youth are that sophisticated adults use drugs. Young persons aspiring to full adulthood therefore, become attracted to these examples."

In closing, I would like to touch on two additional points. Like most parents, I have relied on the movie ratings system to guide me in my children's viewing. The younger ones, for example, are usually not allowed to see R-rated films.

With the G rating virtually extinct, PG has come to be widely regarded by the public as the standard for family viewing, yet the MPAA ratings board continues to put PG or PG 13 ratings on films that contain drug favorable scenes such as "Terms of Endearment," "Poltergeist," "Nine to Five," "Desperately Seeking Susan," and the newest Steven Spielberg box office hit, "Back to the Future." Shouldn't dope smoking be considered with the same severity as nudity or rough language that invariably warrants a restricted R rating?

MPAA officials have also argued that if parents are concerned or confused, they should preview a film before allowing their children to see it. This would undoubtedly boost ticket sales, but it's totally impractical and I think it's a copout. A simple SA drug warning would send an immediate, clear signal to parents and allow them to make that choice over their youngsters' viewing.

Critics of the SA proposal have also raised the spectre of censorship, suggesting that it might be the first step to control of Hollywood's creative product by outside agencies. This is nonsense. The First Amendment that protects Hollywood filmmakers and guarantees their freedom to express themselves in virtually any way they can conceive, also protects me as a journalist and protects my magazine. I am extremely sensitive to the suggestion of censorship and I simply don't see it as a factor in this issue.

Much like the recent efforts by the Parents' Music Resource Center to persuade record companies to put warning labels on record albums that contain patently offensive lyrics, the SA proposal is one of providing consumer information for parents and concerned individuals.

It also focuses on the question of whether Hollywood's creative talents should be more responsible and balanced when they feel it necessary to portray drug usage. Movies are arguably our nation's most persuasive art form, capable of wielding enormous influence on public opinion and behaviour. At this time, in the context of the national tragedy of teenage substance abuse, Hollywood is presently contributing to the problem when it could easily become part of the solution.

## MOVIES CONTAINING POSITIVE DRUG MESSAGES

American Gigolo
Animal House
Annie Hall
Caddyshack
Can't Stop the Music
Cheech & Chong's Next Movie
Class of 1984
Crimes of Passion
Cruising
Desperately Seeking Susan
Easy Rider
Fast Times at Ridgemont High
First Born
Footloose
Friday the 13th - The Final Chapter
Klute
Last of the Red Hot Lovers
Looking for Mr. Goodbar
Love at First Bite
M*A*S*H
Mask
Nashville
National Lampoon Class Reunion
Neighbors
Nice Dreams
Nine to Five
North Dallas Forty
Over the Edge
Perils of Gwendoline
Personal Best
Poltergeist
Private Benjamin
Protocol
Revenge of the Nerds
Risky Business
Romancing the Stone
Serpico
Shampoo
Sharkey's Machine
Shoot the Moon
Silkwood
Sixteen Candles
Spring Break
Still Smoking
Superfly
Ten

57-911 O - 86 - 3

Terms of Endearment
The Big Chill
The Breakfast Club
The Last American Virgin
Things are Tough All Over
Trading Places
Up In Smoke
Vacation
Where the Buffalo Roam
Wolfen
Zapped

## FILMS WITH STRONG ANTI-DRUG MESSAGES

Atlantic City
Fort Apache, The Bronx
Lady Sings the Blues
Panic in Needle Park
Scarface
The French Connection and French Connection II
The Rose
Valley of the Dolls

JUST WHAT WE ALL NEED... A really good hit!

R CCD

"CHEECH AND CHONG'S NEXT MOVIE" Starring CHEECH MARIN and THOMAS CHONG
Written by THOMAS CHONG & CHEECH MARIN Associate Producer PETER MACGREGOR-SCOTT
Produced by HOWARD BROWN Directed by THOMAS CHONG A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

SEPTUM MABLETON
BANNHEAD HWY.
941-3333
3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40, 12:00

NATIONAL FOUR
I-285 AT OLD NATIONAL HWY.
761-9000
2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00, 12:00

NORTHLAKE
NORTHLAKE PARKWAY NEAR DEARS
934-7830
2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:10, 10:10

AMC TOWER PLACE 6
PEACHTREE & PIEDMONT
233-2151
6:00, 8:15, 10:30

NOW SHOWING!

NORTH STARLIGHT DI
3900 MORELAND AVE. SE
457-5750
opens at 8:30

4th HYSTERICAL WEEK!

Please check your newspaper daily-showtimes are subject to change.

CHEECH & CHONG'S
Up in Smoke
Entertainment-Matrix
Don't miss tonight to see this movie!
STARRING CHEECH MARIN AND TOMMY CHONG
TOM SKERRITT EDIE ADAMS STROTHER MARTIN
LOUISA MORITZ AND STACY KEACH AS SGT. STEWARD
WRITTEN BY TOMMY CHONG AND CHEECH MARIN
PRODUCED BY LOU ADLER AND LOU LOMBARDO
DIRECTED BY LOU ADLER
CINEMA 75
STARTS FRIDAY!!
MABLETON TRIPLE
NORTH DEKALB
OLD DIXIE
PHIPPS PLAZA
ROSWELL VILLAGE TWIN

YOU CAN ALWAYS SMELL THE EXCITEMENT IN THE AIR.

THEY'LL HAVE YOU ROLLIN'
IN YOUR SEATS!

Chairman ROTH. Mr. Valenti, would you raise your right hand, please? Do you swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you, Mr. Valenti. We are pleased to have you here today. You, of course, are president of the Motion Picture Association of America, and, as such, have been the chief spokesman, I believe, for the industry since 1966. We appreciate your cooperation with the staff in this investigation and look forward to your statement.

## TESTIMONY OF JACK VALENTI, PRESIDENT, MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Mr. VALENTI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator Stevens.

I'm representing not only the eight member companies of the Motion Picture Association of America but also the Alliance of Television & Motion Picture Producers. I'm representing today several non-MPAA member companies; companies that produce the majority of film and television of this country.

There is no question, Senator, that the work that your committee is doing will illuminate the dangers of drug abuse. This is both useful and very appropriate. The attention that you focus on this issue makes the public have a better and more extensive understanding of what I call the darkening and wounding assaults on this society which is shattering social values and squandering family dissidence. I hope that what I offer here will be of some modest contribution to you in this work which we thoroughly support.

[At this point, Senator Mathias entered the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. The film and television industry is trying to exercise its obligation to the public that it entertain just as you and your colleagues, Senator, are always trying to fulfill your responsibilities to the people that you have, by solemn oath, sworn to serve.

So let me take as little of your time as possible. There is a written document before you that you can read at your convenience. I want to tell you of some positive, and, I think, in my modest judgment, progressive and persistent steps that we are taking to give this issue more attention and to do something useful and worthwhile in the cause that you are leading.

First, I want to announce that we have organized, among the creative part of our industry, the Creative Coalition Against Drug Abuse on whose founding board sit most of the premier decisionmakers in the creative part of our business. This committee will work with all the other antidrug committees and coalitions in effect. It has one simple objective, and that is, each year, to select one or two motion picture films and one or two television programs which best illustrate the work that is being done to show the dangers of drug abuse.

[At this point, Senator Gore entered the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. First, I want to place a laurel on the noble brow of these people who do that. I think that will be useful.

Second, I want to expose for you a little bit about what the motion picture rating system has done. I don't know that I'm going to leave a lot behind me when I have finally departed this vale, but I hope that one of my minor legacies will be the architecture and the durability of a rating system which is quite unique. Neither in publishing, newspapers, books, television, cable, theater, nor whatever is there a system which tries to give advanced cautionary warnings to parents about films so that the parent can then exercise his responsibility, her responsibility to help guide the moviegoing of their young children. No other phase or element or segment of the entertainment/communications industry does that. Indeed, we may be the only part of America that deliberately turns away business at the box office, among those theaters which effectively and thoroughly enforce these ratings.

The objective of the rating system is clear: we give advance warnings to parents, but the parents must exercise responsibility. The rating is meaningful. As Senator Stevens, with his insightful question, pointed out, these ratings are meaningless unless the parent uses them to then find out more about that film.

The rating system is a fragile enterprise. It cannot be a surrogate parent. It cannot solve all the ills which affect this society. It tries, in its own modest way, to lift itself above the level of the crowd and say: here, we want to do something, Mr. and Mrs. Parent, that we think you might find useful.

Now, are we succeeding in that? Mr. Chairman, you talked about polls. I think that all of us in and around the world of politics are acquainted with polls. We recognize mailings that you can send out, and we recognize a scientific poll. For 17 years, we have commissioned the Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, NJ to randomly sample, scientifically select some 2,000 to 2,600 people, young people and adults, every year. It has an error of probability of plus or minus 3 percent. I am very pleased to tell you that this year, the newest poll which was finished in September 1985 reveals that of parents who have children under 18 have given this rating system an all-time high approval rating.

The question was asked, "Do you find the rating system very useful, fairly useful or not very useful in helping you guide your children to moviegoing?" Of parents with children 16 and under, 72 percent said, "We find this very useful to fairly useful;" 20 percent found it not useful; and the rest had no opinion.

I don't have to tell you gentlemen that in your State, if you have an approval rating of 72 percent with a negative of 20, it's not too bad. It shows that the people overwhelmingly, and by landslide proportions, approve of what you're doing.

I present that to you, because by whatever gauge you choose to employ, this kind of response from the people to whom this rating system is directed, the parents. If you don't have children this rating system is has no meaning for you. It's only for parents.

Now, I don't want to go into all the details of how the rating system works. There are about 10 pages here for you. I would be glad to answer any questions you have about it, but I won't take up this presentation time.

Third, Senator Stevens, directly answering your question, we are now girding ourselves for a sterner rating treatment in a more

formal way. The Policy Review Committee, which is composed of exhibitors, independent distributors and the MPAA, is the architect of the guidelines which then are carried out by the rating board. The Policy Review Committee is now considering, and I think doubtless will approve in the next 2 weeks, this guideline:

In response to increasing parental concern for the drug menace in America, effective immediately, no film that involves drug use will be rated less, less than a PG-13, parents strongly cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

It could be an R, and it could be an X, but I'm saying to you, we are putting a floor, which is precisely, I think, the compass course that was being followed by Senator Stevens in his questioning.

Let me now go on to a fourth point that I want to make. I believe that the motion picture and television industry has initiated a broad range of actions regarding drug and alcohol use, which is clearly also a menace in this country. These activities include public service announcements and educational films for use in schools and churches, drug treatment and referral programs, substance abuse conferences and achievement awards for programming which deglamorizes drugs and alcohol. Most importantly, numerous television programs produced by member companies of MPAA and AMPTP—it sounds like I'm in the alphabet business, but we live in that kind of world where acronyms are part of our life—seek to present drug and alcohol use in a realistic and negative light. I'm going to show you, at the conclusion of the next couple of minutes, a little tape I think you will find of more than casual interest.

Let me just, in the few minutes that I have here, tell you some things I think you ought to know. Disney Studios, for example, offers a broad selection of educational videotapes on drug and alcohol use for use in schools. They have spent a lot of money on that. Over the last several years, Columbia Pictures, Orion, Warner Brothers, MGA/UA, and Paramount have produced public service announcements, Senator Gore, which feature stars in television and movies warning against the dangers of drug and alcohol.

On April 11, 1984, 150 senior executives and union officials from the entertainment industry gathered at the Burbank Studios to work on an industrywide program to deal with this problem of substance abuse. As a result, we formed—here we go again—the EIRAC, the Entertainment Industry Referral and Assessment Center. While it has an awkward kind of title, it is really a crucial piece of work that is being done to serve as an umbrella employee-assistance program to serve all members of the film and television industry and their families. As part of its services, EIRAC offers strictly confidential counselling, referral education services to those suffering from alochol or drug abuse.

While it's a referral service, and not a treatment service, it does operate a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week hot line with calls for help, appointments and information. It is administered by the people in our business for the people in our business. It's funded solely from contributions from the motion pictures studios, the television networks, motion picture television producers and the union all gathered together.

In addition to that, Columbia Pictures MGM/UA, Fox, Warner Brothers, Universal, Paramount, all have individual company programs for their employees and their families who may be experiencing this terrible tragedy of alcohol and drug abuse.

We have originated and assisted in a number of industrywide substance abuse conferences. Beginning in 1984, with the Burbank Conference, efforts are being made now to outreach more to educational communities, medical communities, Federal, State, and local agencies.

In August of this year, the entire industry participated in a conference sponsored by the American Psychological Association called "Substance Abuse and the Entertainment Industry Inside and Outside."

On November 12, the Alliance of Motion Picture Television Producers, whom I am representing today as its chairman, will join with the National Institute of Drug Abuse in sponsoring a conference on cocaine abuse.

The most prominent of the organizations that are working here, the Scott Newman Foundation, Entertainment Industries Counsel, are doing great work in this. Scott Newman Foundation presents awards to television programs; it produces its own educational films. I have attached a list of those Scott Newman films. The Entertainment Industry Council is also working as a catalyst.

Now, I have completed what I call my formal presentation. I want to now show you a tape, but before I do, one paragraph of conclusion: Mr. Chairman, we have no illusions about this dark menace called drug and alcohol abuse. The fact that it has attracted the attention and the concern of the First Lady, Mrs. Reagan, is only confirming evidence that we need to enlist every family in America in this cause. It's a family worry, it's a disquieting church and school anxiety. It's a national fungus.

We understand that. I am the father of three children, and I care a lot about their future. I care passionately about it. They're young in their life. It's all ahead of them.

So I want to show you, as corroboration of the deep down, gut feelings of people in our business about this menace, I this little tape. It would be so much better if it's possible to turn off these lights. We can't do that? Well, all right. Then I will do the best I can. I don't think you are going to be able to see this very well, but we'll do the best we can.

Please, may we see it?

Here we go.

[Whereupon, at this time, a videotape was shown to the subcommittee. At this point, Chairman Roth left the hearing room. At this point, Senator Gore left the hearing room.]

Senator STEVENS. [presiding]. That was a very powerful message, Jack. The chairman has gone to vote, and Senator Mathias and I will have to leave soon. I want you to know I'm pleased to see you here and to hear you describe the drug menace as a fungus. I think it is every bit as much an epidemic as AIDS, and yet we seem to be forgetting about the it as we face some of these other problems.

I would like to ask you a couple of questions. Mr. Satchell attached these Cheech and Chong ads to his testimony. I have noticed these before. I'm a little disturbed about the impact of this

subliminal advertising in movie ads on the young people. You and your industry have done a great deal toward trying to set some standards. Have you addressed the advertising portion of the movie base as well as the content of movies? Go ahead.

Senator MATHIAS. I don't want to interrupt your question, but I thought before Mr. Valenti answered it, I would just say this: That the question I intended to ask was by what techniques you would deglamorize drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and I think you have already answered that question very graphically by these films.

[At this point, Chairman Roth entered the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. In that tape, yes, sir.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you, my friend.

Mr. VALENTI. Thank you, Senator Mathias.

Senator MATHIAS. Thank you.

Senator STEVENS. Do you address the content of advertising in your rating system?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes; we do, Senator. And I must say to you that I think the two problems that we have had, astonishingly, have never been brought out to parents when we do our scientific polling: one is advertising and the other is trailers in movies. To deal with these problems, we are attaching a great deal more severity in their treatment. We have an advertising code office.

[At this point, Senator Mathias withdrew from the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. When you submit your picture for rating through the rating code administration, you also submit your advertising.

Now, mind you, we are walking a very delicate line here, and that is, How do you handle this without being a censor?

So we work with the marketing people. When they put too much blood in the ads or we think the photo is a little too sensual or where there is a drug use in the picture, that ad is not accepted. I do think that the Cheech & Chong movies are the ones that have caused us the most trouble as far as the ads are concerned. Those films are invariably rated R, which makes them, of course, a restricted film. But I would have to say possibly that we haven't done the job we ought to have done in those particular movies.

I think you'll find most of the ads are not that bad any more, because—and I use this word again with great sensitivity—we are trying to sanitize them so that nothing appears in that ad that would offend parents beyond what we think is reasonably offensive—whatever that means.

Senator STEVENS. It seems that the printed media ought to join together and form a group that would set some standards such as you have set for the films themselves. I think the Parade magazine people have called to our attention some problems with the inducements of going to these movies, such as showing people rolling marijuana cigarettes, and the whole advertising concept of "Don't go straight to see this movie," "Go up in smoke," and a "Really good hit."

Just putting an R on those movies doesn't seem to me sufficient. I have heard more about those series of movies than any of the rest in recent history, and it bothers me that there isn't some way to put them in the category they ought to be in, and that is, really, X-

rated movies because of their inducement to get into the drug business or get into the use of drugs. It is a pretty bad scene.

I think, as I say, I have raised five kids. I think everyone has, during this period, the Vietnam War and the aftermath, knows what it means to try to counsel children through a real stressful period of their lives.

But these things, I think they just go too far in terms of inducing people to go to movies, will take them right back into their problem area again.

I would hope that as you go, and I congratulate you, this new group you have formed that you have attached to the statement here, this new—what do you call it?

Mr. VALENTI. The Creative Coalition of Drug Abuse.

Senator STEVENS. Yes, the Creative Coalition. I would like to see if we could get some help from other parts of the business, such as the printed media themselves, in trying to refuse these ads. Just giving that R rating isn't enough, in my opinion, when the advertising itself is so subliminal, particularly as far as using marijuana is concerned.

I have to run and vote. I appreciate your being here.

Mr. VALENTI. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you, Senator Stevens.

[At this point, Senator Stevens withdrew from the hearing room.]

Chairman ROTH. Let me start off by saying that first, I want to congratulate the industry for the fact that it has been aware of the problem, it has taken some steps to correct the situation, and I think that is most important. The purpose of the hearing today is to see whether anything more can be done on a voluntary basis. And I might say that I don't see the polls that have been mentioned this morning necessarily in conflict. I suspect that many parents are pleased with the fact that there are ratings, but that is not necessarily inconsistent with the desire for more information, to want to know why a particular move is given a particular rating. So the first question I would like to ask you, Mr. Valenti, is: What is the objection to making available to the public, the critics, the others who are interested in this matter the reason for the ratings? Is there an objection to that?

Mr. VALENTI. Well, we have looked at it over the last 10 to 12 years, Mr. Chairman. We are continuing to examine it, because it is—the concept is singularly attractive. It is simple to state, it is easy to understand, but as you and all of us in the political world understand, it is one thing to state a concept. It is far different to try to implement it and to make it reasonable and fair and effective.

Let me break it down for you. First there is the matter of accurate description. When you give a reason for a rating that's going to be passed along to the public and bulleted, you can't use a paragraph. You have to do it in words such as violence, language, sensuality, drug use, alcohol use, suicide, whatever the theme might be in it.

Now, it may be, Senator, that in a film, and by the way, there have been over 7,000 films rated since the inception of the system. Some 340 to 400 films are rated each year. When you use the term "violence," it becomes a description. It may be a fellow lashing out

with his fists in a fight that takes up maybe 20 seconds in the film or it may be an extended gun battle in another area, and yet the word violence applies to both. How is the parent to know?

The parent wants to know what kind of violence. It is not enough to say violence. The same way with language. I grew up in the Bible Belt of southeast Texas, and I understand the people, the fundamentalists, Christians who live there and work there who believe that taking the Lord's name in vain is the sternest and vilest blasphemy one can take.

If we say language to someone who is deeply religious; he would want to know what kind of language. The reason why we have taken the approach much as our Constitution does, is to state what the issue is, and to lay down the criteria and then let the people themselves decide what it is they want to see or not want to see.

We say, in PG, as Senator Stevens earlier stated, parental guidance suggested; some material may not be suitable for young children. That's a clear warning, Mr. Chairman, and that's been on our legends for 17 years, and sometimes people don't even notice that.

So putting out a symbol or a letter is not sufficient. When you say PG–13, we are saying, "parents strongly cautioned; some material may not be appropriate." That's a very stern, clear, unobscure, unambiguous warning, and R says restricted, "Contains adult material," but undergirding the entire rating system is the assumption, not only the assumption, is the demand that for it to provide value to the family, the parent must involve him or herself.

My youngest daughter is 17; 3, 4, 5 years ago, I watched very closely the movies that she saw that I would allow her to see. If I hadn't seen it, I would find out about it by asking people who had seen it.

So I'm saying this is a very difficult thing, and then how do you get this information out, 800 phone numbers. Can you mail them to 20,000 screens in America at any one time? There are 300 to 400 movies playing all over the country. This is a plural society, 50 States. The logistics becomes difficult.

I'm not being defensive, Senator. I'm telling you this is something that we have tried to do; we have tried in the past, and we are still trying to figure out ways to do it so that, one, it would not be inaccurate to the parent, No. 2, would not be a blight on the producer who says, "You're labeling my film a roman orgy, by saying language, sensuality, violence, et cetera, and I've only got 27 seconds of that in a 2 hour and 20 minutes movie. How dare you do that to me."

So we have to consider that. This is the implementation of that. How logistically do you make it work so that parents are treated fairly, they get information when they want it, it is accurate, and it fulfills their needs for information? That is not easy to do, but we're trying desperately to do it. I still have to say that on top of all of this, there is no great public outcry saying this rating system is either negative or frail or it's crippled or defective in any way. As I said by that survey, 72 percent of parents with children under 18 finally——

Chairman ROTH. I hate to interrupt, but we do have a timeframe problem. Votes are going on. I know you have further commitments.

Let me just ask—I'm not sure that I know what the answer to it is—about the test, the experiment in Kansas City?

Mr. VALENTI. Kansas-Missouri.

Chairman ROTH. In Kansas City, MO, there was a very interesting experiment. I regret it didn't continue for a longer period of time. It appears that some progress was made in giving some information to parents, and I would just urge you to review that situation, because it's very simple to say the problem is one for parents. Basically, that is right, of course; I have two teenagers myself.

But I think we are putting our heads in the sand if we say that it is only a problem of parents. I might say that I'm also concerned not only about those children who have the kind of parental guidance that is necessary, but we are concerned about all children. I happen to think we have a very, very serious drug problem and that the only way we are going to attack that successfully is to do something about the demand. I think that is where the film and the media play a very, very important role. I would hope that you would look at that problem very carefully.

Let me go back to a comment that the previous witness made, because I think it is something that you ought to comment on. I am concerned about the allegation that you do not think there is a drug problem. I think you heard it earlier. Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. VALENTI. Mr. Chairman, I not only think there's a drug problem, as I said in my statement, I think it's a growing menace in this country. My wife and I were very, very concerned about this as our children were growing up. Thank God, I think the social values, the construct of values they learned in our home helped them defend, and they were never involved in the drug problem.

But I know of a lot of my friends, and I have prayed with them, and I have been at their house at night, with problems late at night in problems with their children, so I know it first hand.

I don't think anyone in America who is sane and of modest intelligence can deny there's a drug problem, and everyone is concerned about it, of course. I certainly am. As a parent, I'm deeply concerned.

Chairman ROTH. Do you agree that there are some movies that glamorize the use of drugs?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir; I certainly do.

Chairman ROTH. So that you are in agreement with the other witnesses who see the problem?

Mr. VALENTI. That is right, Senator. I want to put this in perspective, because I don't want to be misquoted about it. We produce about 700 hours of films a year. My judgment is that of those 700 hours, probably no more than one hour of films would be devoted to the glamorization. So I'm talking about less than that, maybe a half hour when you take all of the scenes collectively. So you're talking about a minescule part.

The vast majority of films in America do not glamorize drugs, the vast, overwhelming majority. Maybe I should phrase it in the positive, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROTH. I guess the problem is that there are some that are directed at the teenagers such as the ones I have already mentioned.

Mr. VALENTI. I won't deny that. I think that's very true.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask you this: Shouldn't dope smoking be considered the same as nudity or rough language, both of which invariably warrant restricted ratings? Would you agree with that or not?

Mr. VALENTI. We're dealing with that, as I told you, in this new criterion which we can formally encase it within the rules of the rating board, that no use of drugs, casual or otherwise, will be given a rating of less than a PG–13, which is quite a severe rating. I dare say that most of that would go into the R, and there's nothing to prevent it from being X.

Chairman ROTH. Yes. I think that is of——

Mr. VALENTI [interposing]. By the way, I might add, Mr. Chairman, that the X rating in the rating board's lexicon is not pornography. It can be theme, it can be violence, it can be drugs, it can be brutalizing language, it can be any of those things.

In the public's mind, X means sex. But in the rulebook of our rating system, that is not so at all.

Chairman ROTH. Let me turn to a different aspect of the problem. As you well know, we in Government are always concerned about the problem of conflict of interest and we try to ensure that on any commission the public interest is represented.

As I said earlier, I think the industry is to be congratulated for many years ago moving in the direction of self discipline. Still, let me raise the question, because you mentioned earlier that the producer or theater owner might be concerned that a given rating would have an impact on the financial success of the film.

Mr. VALENTI. I did not say that, Senator.

Chairman ROTH. I think you made some reference to the——

Mr. VALENTI. The labeling of a film as violent because there is some violence in it concerns a director more because it does not represent what he felt the film stated "creatively" rather than due to financial concern.

Chairman ROTH. Let me say, anyway, that there are those that would suspect a financial motivation, and, obviously, most of these producers and others are rightfully in the business to make a profit. So I'm not being critical of that.

But going back to the question of conflict of interest, is the public represented at the various levels. You have the rating board and the appeals board. Is there any representation on those for the so-called public interest, for the interests of children? If so, how does that work?

Mr. VALENTI. Well, first, Senator, ours is a voluntary program. No one is forced to be a part of this. That's the first point.

The second point is that the rating system has been insulated against pressures within the industry in the following manner: I and I alone appoint the chairman of the rating board. No one, no matter how powerful, no matter how important, no matter what a titan he is, cannot force that chairman out of office. I stand as the shield between the industry and the public and everybody else against the rating system.

No. 3, the chairman chooses the six members of that board. There are seven members including himself. We consult with the Parents-Teachers Association of California. Each year, they have a mother who comes on to serve on the rating board. We try to get people who are varying in colors and religion, all of whom have to be parents.

[At this point, Senator Gore entered the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. They are the public, but no one can touch the rating board. It is self funding. The rating board does not receive contributions from anyone. It is funded by fees paid by the voluntary submission of films by producers to the rating system.

So I think that it has been a system that has reckoned with the passage of time. It has existed for 17 years. Its very durability mystiques a kind of integrity for the one thing which I've tried to protect beyond anything else, is the integrity of the program.

[At this point, Chairman Roth withdrew from the hearing room.]

Mr. VALENTI. I think it's also fair to state for the record that not once, in all of these years, has there been one confirming piece of evidence that anyone, producer, exhibitor, public or anybody, found the slightest slackening in the integrity and the honesty of the rating system. That in itself, that kind of durability and purpose over 17 years, is a laurel that few enterprises can claim.

Senator GORE. Mr. Valenti, the chairman is leaving to respond to this second vote which is now underway. I am sorry that we have had all these votes during your testimony, but that can't be helped. Some of the other members of the subcommittee are also returning.

I would like to ask a few questions at this time. First of all, I would like to preface my questions by saying that as one member of this committee, I deeply appreciate the leadership which you have offered within the entertainment industry. The rating system has been criticized by people from time to time, but the poll you have cited corresponds with my own feelings about it as a parent.

It does give parents an opportunity to better exercise their parental responsibilities. My wife and I have four children, all under the age of 12, and we are able to use the ratings to help raise our children according to the values that we want to impart to them. I have found it extremely useful as a parent, and I know it didn't occur by accident. It happens because you as an individual in the private sector exercised leadership, moral leadership and political leadership, and I personally appreciate it. I think that many millions of Americans do, as well.

I think there are some problems with it, and I do want to ask you some questions, but I wanted to make that statement to put the questions in perspective, because I think the ratings system has been an outstanding success. My problems with it stem, in part, from the treatment of violence of a kind that seems excessive and at times bizarre, such as the chain saw massacres and what-not. Yet violence is not treated in the same way as a scene with sexual content.

I know these hearings are focused on the drug abuse aspect of movies, and I will ask about that in a moment. Recently, we had a statement from the United Methodist Church—I believe that was

the one—and I am wondering if there has been an increased sensitivity within the industry to this point.

Mr. VALENTI. Senator, I am deeply grateful for your statement.

First, what you have just declared is really a perception that the public has that we treat sensuality with a higher degree of focus than we do violence. Respectfully, affectionately, sir, that's not true.

Violence is given the same kind of priority that all the other elements that we would consider to be usefully illuminating are given: drugs, language, theme, violence. They're all treated the same. One is not elevated over the other. It just so happens that many times that many people will edit a film with violence in it that they would not edit a film with sex in it. Don't ask me, but that's what they do.

Senator GORE [interposing]. What do you mean by that?

Mr. VALENTI. What I mean by that is if you are out to make a pointedly sexual film you really don't care about the rating. You are going to a small but stable audience. Whereas if you're making a film to entertain, part of the telling of that story, the creative commander has inserted in it violence, which he believes maybe you and I would disagree, is essential to the dramatic narrative to that story. He comes to the rating board which says, "this is an X." More than likely, after some negotiating, he's willing to excise some of the violence. The rating board never asks anybody to delete 1 millimeter of film. That is freedom of the screen. However, the choice lies with the director, the producer, whoever is the creative commander of that particular film. Many times, he will edit; that is, he will edit out some of the more extreme portions of violence.

That's a fact of life, also. When we rate a film R, Senator, that's a very severe rating. Indeed, when I designed the rating system some 17 years ago, there was no X rating. I thought we would leave it with an R, which means if you wanted your child to see it, no agency, no Congressman, no Jack Valenti, no group ought to tell you you couldn't do it.

It's your child, not mine and not yours. I would not want somebody on this panel to tell me how to raise my children.

But the theater owners, I think, in their own wisdom felt that there ought to be an X rating because there were criminal obscenity laws in various communities. They were afraid without an X rating they might be subject to prosecution.

So forming a political consensus, I agreed to the X rating. I only go through this historical litany to tell you that the R rating is severe, so when you see an R, it says that a parent has to take a child, or an adult guardian should take a child to the film to see it. If you have some violence that doesn't quite reach the X category, the R is the proper place to insert it.

Now, one final thing. I disagree personally sometimes, Senator, with some of the ratings of the rating board. I disagree because we deal in a subjective area. What is too much violence? Where do you draw the line on sensuality? What about language? I disagree with them sometimes. If I disagree, I certainly know that the public at large will find disagreement.

This is a circuitous, long-winded answer to your question, but it is hard for me to answer it simply and concisely, because it is not a question which is congenial to concise answers.

Senator GORE. Maybe my impression is wrong, but I thought that the step from PG and PG–13 to R, the first restricted category, was a little different for sex as opposed to violence.

Mr. VALENTI. That is not true, sir.

Senator GORE. Well, I will take your statement, and I——

Mr. VALENTI [interposing]. What it is, Senator, in the sense that the way we rate films, that is not in the minds of the people who rate. What comes out in the film might be in the mind of someone else, my own, for example.

Senator GORE. Much of this is subjective, and I understand that. However, I am given to believe that there are some pretty gruesome scenes that do not trigger an R simply if they're violent, and yet if they involved sex or nudity, they would. It's a delicate subject. I understand that, but I'm just expressing my own concern that maybe there's not sufficient sensitivity to violence. There are all these slasher movies now, and it seems as if they are not treated with the same degree of concern and sensitivity.

I may be wrong, and I haven't done a comprehensive survey of this at all. Indeed, this hearing is really focused on a different matter.

[At this point, Senator Nunn entered the hearing room.]

Senator GORE. Overall, I want to reiterate. I think that the rating system is a good one and has been a tremendous success in spite of the fact that some view it as unsuccessful. I think the addition of PG–13 was beneficial, and I know that that was preceded by a heated debate within the industry. I think it has turned out to be a wise move, because there had been an erosion of PG over the years.

The treatment of violence is a problem. It's not confined just to your entry. I noted, for example, that last Sunday night, here in the Washington, DC, area, one of the television stations, channel 7—is that WJLA——

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir, that's the ABC affiliate.

Senator GORE [continuing]. Showed "The Exorcist" over the air during early prime time. I really question, not as a Senator, but as a parent and a citizen, whether that's good judgment, whether that really meets a station's responsibilities to its audience.

Have you seen the movie, "The Exorcist"?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir.

Senator GORE. It is an example of the trend toward a lot of gruesome violence, and yet they felt that was acceptable to broadcast the movie at a time when the young audience of all ages, is at one of its highest points. What would you think about such a decision?

Mr. VALENTI. Senator, I did not watch the television version of "The Exorcist," but I do know it is standard practice for the producer of the film to work with the television network to do what is called editing for television. Usually, at the beginning of the films which have been so edited is a little legend beneath the titles crawl which says, "Edited for Television."

Not having actually seen the television version, I can only speak generally about the policy. My judgment would be that that film

had been edited so that the excision of some of the more provocative scenes would have taken place. That is what is usually happens, because unlike the movie, where you have to make a deliberate decision as a parent to either allow your child to go or not to go, broadcast television comes into the home uninvited.

There is a different, buttressing set of criteria that you would use for that kind of a viewing instead of what you would use for theatrical viewing.

Senator GORE. Yes. I did not see the full film, either, and I will ask a few more questions of the appropriate people outside of this hearing if that is necessary to buttress the record here. My family and I were watching television, just flipping through the channels waiting for the world series. We watched "60 Minutes" and were going through the channels and there it was. I felt that was——

Mr. VALENTI [interposing]. I was doing the same thing.

Senator GORE [continuing]. Pardon me?

Mr. VALENTI. I was doing the same thing.

Senator GORE. When a movie is rated R, it is in what you referred to as a restricted category. Does the—pardon my ignorance—but does the theater owner have an obligation of some sort as a result of that R rating?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir. As I said, the rating system is a voluntary system which is part of its strength, I think. The National Association of Theatre Owners have conducted various surveys from time to time. They tell me that about 80 percent of the theaters in America do adhere to and faithfully enforce the ratings. There's about a 20-percent slippage. That's the bad news.

The good news is that almost anything we do in a law-administered society where we have got murder laws and drug violation laws, to have a 20-percent slippage only is pretty good.

So I find that comforting. Critics would not find it so loving, however. On the other hand Senator, we get a lot of letters from people, of angry parents who go to a theater and drop their kids off at an R-rated movie and find them barred at the door and just raise all kinds of hell about, "How dare you do this."

So we catch it on both ends of the stick.

Senator GORE. Yes; what is the source of that 80-percent figure, again?

Mr. VALENTI. From the National Association of Theatre Owners, which is the trade association of the cinema in this country.

Senator GORE. Did they send out a questionnaire to the theater owners, or did they conduct some more objective survey?

Mr. VALENTI. I think it was a questionnaire to theater owners, but since that's not my beat, I'm not quite sure. We can find out, though.

Senator GORE. My impression is that the slippage may be substantially more than that. I wonder if the industry association, which has exercised such terrific leadership in these areas, has a sense of responsibility to try to strengthen the adherence to this voluntary system by all members of the industry, including the theater owners.

Mr. VALENTI. Absolutely. Each year, I attend the annual convention of NATO, as it's called. In November it will be held in New Orleans. I will be there. I meet frequently with theater leaders. As

a matter of fact, we are meeting in 10 days on a number of subjects, and one of them is the rating system and the enforcement.

I must say, I have to congratulate the leaders of the theater industry. They try, with all the energy that they can summon, to make sure that this slippage is as small as it can be. But you are dealing with 20,000 screens in the country.

Senator GORE. I understand.

Mr. VALENTI. We find that the enforcement is stronger in the neighborhood, say, on McArthur Boulevard, where there is a theater near my home, than it is in the Chicago Loop or in Midtown Manhattan, where the laxity is more pronounced.

So it depends on where the theater is located and all the other things that go into that.

Senator GORE. Let me say in closing, before turning it over to Senator Nunn, that I was impressed by your testimony and by the initiative which you announced in your testimony of setting a floor under the ratings given to films that have drug use scenes in them.

[At this point, Chairman Roth entered the hearing room.]

Senator GORE. I think that is another example of your willingness to exercise some leadership. Some on the committee may not feel that goes far enough; I don't know. I see it as a constructive response to the expressions of concern which have been forthcoming, and as I indicated earlier, another example of the leadership that you have been offering in this industry. I personally appreciate it and urge you to continue.

I will not be able to stay for the whole hearing, but I am very concerned about this and will remain active and concerned. I appreciate your appearance here.

Mr. VALENTI. Thank you, Senator Gore.

Senator GORE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROTH. Senator Nunn?

## OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR NUNN

Senator NUNN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a prepared statement to insert into the record at this point.

Mr. Chairman, in March 1985, our subcommittee examined the role of the television entertainment industry in the campaign against drug abuse. This morning, I am pleased to join with you as the subcommittee continues its examination of efforts of the entertainment community to deglamourize drug use through the motion picture industry.

In past hearings, our subcommittee has examined the illegal drug trade in this country from a variety of angles, including international narcotics trafficking and importation into this country, the role of organized crime and violence in the drug trade, and the massive laundering of illegal narcotics profits through offshore banking. Our subcommittee has sought legislative action for a stronger and more effective effort by our Government in the war against drugs. Testimony before this subcommittee laid the foundation for subsequent enactment of antidrug legislation in critically needed areas, including providing military assistance to drug law enforcement agencies and expanding the role of the Internal Revenue Service in drug enforcement.

These efforts, of course, deal with the role of Government on the enforcement side of the drug problem. Today, we focus on the role of the private sector—particularly the entertainment industry—on the educational side of the drug problem. It is increasingly obvious that drug abuse, like other social ills, demands the attention and efforts not only of Government, but also of the private sector—the family and the business community alike.

This morning we will look at one segment of the private sector—the motion picture industry—which I believe has an especially great potential for making a real

difference in the war against drug abuse. Young people are more than ever before closely attuned to the world of feature films. One can hardly dispute the marked influence of the motion picture industry in influencing the views and lifestyles of young Americans. If we are to succeed in combating drug abuse, we must have a strong and active effort by those in the motion picture industry to persuade our youth that the use of drugs is not the normal, expected, or adult thing to do. Motion pictures can be a uniquely powerful tool in the war against drugs: sending the message that there is, in fact, no glory in drugs, but instead only a lifestyle destined to failure. That kind of support cannot, of course, be mandated by Government. In our system, it must come voluntarily, and from within the ranks of the motion picture industry itself.

I look forward to hearing this morning from representatives of the feature film industry as well as entertainment publications and other groups on the importance of deglamourizing drug usage in the media.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you and the majority staff for your fine effort in making today's hearing possible. Educational efforts by the private sector are ctitical in the continuing battle against drug abuse. This is an enormously important subject, Mr. Chairman, and I greatly appreciate your leadership on it.

Again, I want to congratulate you for focusing on this important subject. I didn't hear Mr. Valenti's testimony but I know, in keeping with his past testimony, that it will be very positive and helpful. I am sure it has been of great assistance to the committee. I just have a couple of quesitons. One follows up, Mr. Valenti, on Senator Gore's question about slippage. Just without any statistical analysis at all, my experience as a parent is that the figures would be more like the reverse of that ratio, something like 80 percent slippage and 20 percent compliance.

I must say that I have never had my young ones come home after being turned down from going to a movie, and we have tried to restrict them, but not always with great success. It is a frustrating thing for all parents. Who has done those surveys to determine that 80–20 ratio?

Mr. VALENTI. The National Association of Theatre Owners is a partner in the rating enterprise with the Motion Picture Association. It is a separate organization, whose members are theater owners in this country. They're the ones that I rely on to work with in order to get the enforcement at the theaters at as high a level as possible. They're the ones who respond to me when I suggest that we ought to have—"what are the numbers? What do you think is the endorsement rating of the theaters. They do these kinds of probing from time to time.

Senator NUNN. I think it would be very interesting to get an outside, independent analysis of that.

[At this point, Senator Gore left the hearing room.]

Senator NUNN. I don't know whether it is possible to do something like that. I do understand the voluntary nature of it, I understand the importance of that, and I am not suggesting a governmental effort here, but rather some private effort to determine what really has happened.

I'm for a rating system, but what I sometimes fear, I must say, frankly, is that the rating system is used to promote the movie rather than to inform, and used with that in mind. That is, again, a fear I have without access to conclusive proof on it. What are the statistics? You have got G, PG, R, and then X ratings, correct?

Mr. VALENTI. G, PG, PG–13, and R and X. There are now five categories.

Senator NUNN. Do you have statistics about the number of movies produced, let's say, over the last 5 years in each of those categories?

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir, I would suggest to you that R is about 45 percent, PG and PG–13 is about 45 percent, and the other 10 percent is split between the least severe category, which is G and the most severe, which is X.

Let me——

Senator NUNN. Does that mean that really, G movies are money losers? It must mean that. That is discouraging to me as to what it says about our society now.

Mr. VALENTI. Let me tell you what our problem is. The producers in the motion picture industry are like people who convey that which they have produced to the public. If the public wants buy what it is they have produced, they'll produce it.

There's no shortage of G-rated pictures, Senator, but there is a terrific shortage of G-rated audiences. People don't go see Disney movies any more. As a matter of fact, the last five Disney movies aimed at children were, I am desolated to tell you, financial flops.

Senator NUNN. What does that tell us about society, in your personal view? I know you are a family man yourself, and I know your own standards are very high. But as a personal matter, not speaking for the association if you choose, what does it tell you about our society, and does that give you pause as to where we are going as a society?

Mr. VALENTI. Senator, I worry that the family discipline about which I talked and the effect of school and church and the lack of public censures, that once kept everybody within a kind of a parameter of the social mores and customs, has eroded and collapsed over the last couple of decades. However, I do see—and I think the films that reflect this—I see an ascension, happily, of a reinforcement of some stronger values. I'm not a social scientist, I'm not a philosopher, but I think those of us in the world of politics maybe can sense trends a lot faster than some other people.

I will tell you this: That the big winners today in the motion picture box office are not the slashers and the chain saw murderers and that sort of thing; it's a different kind of movie. If you took the 10 all-time high grossers of the last several years, they would be "Star Wars," "Return of the Jeddi," "The Empire Strikes Back," "Indiana Jones," "Back to the Future," and "E.T." These are the films which have captured the attention of the public. I'm not going to suggest to you that "Rambo" is not a big success, but I think "Rambo" is saying something else: The message of "Rambo" was, "Finally, we are doing something where we are trying to win," and I think it's a frustration of the American public of always seeing headlines and being participants in losing enterprises or failed enterprises. "Rambo" suddenly says, "By Jingo, we can win."

My final point. I have what is known as Valenti's law. It is this: If you make a film that nobody wants to see, no rating will help you. If you make a film that a lot of people want to see, no rating will hurt you. What am I saying, Senator? It's in the creative skills of the film maker, engaging the audience, the dramatic narrative, the story telling. That's the key to a popular movie.

Senator NUNN. What about a movie like "Chariots of Fire"? Where was that rated?

Mr. VALENTI. "Chariots of Fire," was rated PG because of snippets of language in it, really barren of anything that would be——

Senator NUNN. I thought that was a wonderful movie with a great moral message and enjoyed it very much. I was amazed that it wasn't rated G. That made me think to myself when I saw that, now, is G a disadvantage in terms of enticing people to come see a movie? Why would they rate "Chariots of Fire" PG?

Mr. VALENTI. Because a lot of producers believe, truthfully, that G is the kiss of death. They don't want an X. They don't want a G.

Senator NUNN. That is what I was concerned about. So that in the rating system, in effect, they don't really want a G rating. They think it will hurt them.

Mr. VALENTI. Yes, sir, because it's perception. In politics, perception is reality, as all of us know. In the movie industry, it's the same way. People perceive wrongfully that G means a children's movie.

My favorite all-time movie, Senators which I have seen maybe 17 or 18 times—is a G-rated movie. It is a "Man For All Seasons," the story of Sir Thomas Moore and Henry the VIII. That's a gem of a movie. If this movie came out today with a G rating, everybody would think it is going to be a cartoon or a children's movie.

Senator NUNN. Couldn't you think about changing a rating so that you could accommodate the words "children's show." Could you maybe change the rating so that you would give a movie like "Chariots of Fire" or "Man for All Seasons" something other than G but something that gives it a high rating and not a disadvantage?

I think this is a reverse incentive for the rating system when the letter G is something that producers don't want.

Mr. VALENTI. Senator, as a matter of fact, that is one of the things that we are looking at, and that is to having a movie that is strictly for children and then having a movie that just simply doesn't happen to have language, violence, or sexuality or drug use in it, but is still a movie of great dramatic importance, and that is a problem.

One of the troubles is that if you change a rating, you can change the name of it, but it takes on the patina of the films it inhabited. So after a while, whatever new rating you have, it depends on what films are in that rating category.

Senator NUNN. I agree that we know now that G is a disadvantage and that there is a disincentive for people to have that label on their movie. It seems to me that that ought to tell us that we do need to tinker with the system somewhat.

Mr. VALENTI. That is right. I couldn't agree with you more. One of the things we are looking at, is how to take that G rating, maybe bifurcate it and continue to use part of it for the "Man for All Seasons," "Chariots of Fire," "Snowy River," or "Black Stallion," wonderful, wonderful films that came out.

By the way, "Black Stallion" was rated G and did very well at the box office. I have to confess that.

Senator NUNN. I know it is difficult, but I wish you could give positive ratings. I wish there were ways to give positive points. Ev-

erything now focuses on how bad it is. It would be better if there were a way to say in the rating, for instance, whether a movie had a moral message, even if there was, say, abusive language in it.

Mr. VALENTI. Senator, one of the things I have to tell you we cannot do is to pass "quality" judgments on films.

That comes down to the eye of the beholder and what prism you are looking through. We are very careful to not to say this film is good or bad, moral or immoral. We tell you some of the contents, and warn Mr. and Mrs. Parent to be very cautious about this and find out more about this film. It has nothing to do with quality.

Senator NUNN. Right. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you, Senator Nunn.

Mr. Rinzel?

Mr. RINZEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of brief questions.

Mr. Valenti, you testified that you felt that there was no great ground swell of parental concern about the current rating system based, in part, on the annual surveys that your organization conducts which shows a 70 percent plus approval rating of the current rating system, is that correct?

Mr. VALENTI. Well, I said we have not detected any ground swell of outrage on the part of parents about a rating system that is not doing what it purports to do.

Mr. RINZEL. But your surveys do not ask parents whether or not they would like to have further information such as the reasons for the ratings, those annual surveys that you conduct don't ask parents that question.

My question is, Would you be willing to include such a question in your future annual surveys so that you could more accurately determine whether parents do, indeed, want more information?

Mr. VALENTI. Oh, I think—I don't think I could tell you right now what the answer would be, Mr. Rinzel. It would be 100 percent. People, sure, would like to have more information. If you ask the people of America would they like to have more care centers or whatever, I mean everybody is going to say yes, of course.

Mr. RINZEL. You indicated in your testimony that your chief concern about giving the reasons for the ratings is that it would be too difficult to describe accurately what the reasons for the ratings were?

That is my understanding of what you said.

Mr. VALENTI. That's a correct understanding. That's one of the reasons; the logistics is another. But the primary reason is, how do you convey an accurate description of a film?

Mr. RINZEL. But in your experiment that was conducted in Kansas and Missouri in 1980 or 1981, you did, in fact, describe what the reasons for the ratings were for a number of pictures at that time. For example, releases that were put out indicated that for the film "Christine F," this picture is rated R because of language, sensuality, drug use; "Missing," this picture is rated PG because of language, moderate violence; "Face With Two Left Feet," this picture is rated PG because of mild language; "Savage Harvest," this picture is rated PG because of wild life violence, language.

Now, someone was able to put together a description of the reasons for the ratings in what appears to be an informative and simple manner and I am wondering why you say that it is impossible to describe the reasons for the ratings when it was done in that particular experiment?

Mr. VALENTI. I wasn't saying that, Mr. Rinzel. Of course, we did that. I got with the rating board and suggested they do it for several hundred films just as a test to see: How would we say this?

Where you and I have collided a little bit is on our interpretation of what I said. The problem lies not in violence, sensuality and language, drug use. That's a simple thing to put. What does a parent get from that? If there are four pictures that have language, sensuality and violence, those pictures are all different. What kind of violence? What kind of language? To say language could be——

Mr. RINZEL. It says mild language.

Mr. VALENTI. What does mild language mean to you? For example, mild language may mean one thing to you, another thing to me. Maybe my religious beliefs say that what is mild to you is blasphemous to me.

This is a plural society, sir. There are 237 million people in America, all races, religions, all kinds. Each of them is looking through his own prism. No one of us can say to them, when we say mild language, "You don't have to worry, but we do have to worry."

Mr. RINZEL. Isn't it true, Mr. Valenti, that the chief concern among producers and distributors underlying their opposition for giving the reasons for the ratings is their fear that such reasons will undermine their advertising campaigns for particular films? That is, if the truth comes out about what's in a film and it contradicts what their advertising campaign has indicated the film is about, they are afraid they are going to lose box office receipts?

Mr. VALENTI. No, I don't believe that at all. I think there is concern that marketing will go awry, but for a different reason. For example, I have a romantic story of a young man and a woman and the perils of their romance. It's sweet and it's loving and it's poignant, but I do have in there two pieces of language. I do have a fleeting scene of sensuality, 5, 10 seconds. I might have two fellows fighting each other in an alley for a brief moment, taking up maybe 40 seconds of a beautiful, loving story. Yet I must say "language, sensuality, and violence." That has to be part of how you advertise a film. The producer and the director can rightfully say, "But this is not my film. My film isn't language. It isn't sensuality, it isn't violence. My film is a sensitive, romantic love story between two people."

That is a reason why some of these simple words can distort, distend, and literally disfigure the kind of marketing that you want to do for a film which has nothing to do with the film itself.

Chairman ROTH. Time is moving on. I do have one final question I would like to ask you, Mr. Valenti. What is your view of the so-called SA rating?

Mr. VALENTI. What I'm not sure of, Senator, is when they say SA do they mean a separate category for SA or do you mean SA as an explanatory two letters for a film? I was never quite sure about that.

Chairman ROTH. Would you comment on both?

Mr. VALENTI. I will comment on both. First, we have five categories now. How many more can this rating system sustain without totally confusing the public? You see, when the first I heard of this, some of the people around me and some of the people in my family thought SA meant sex appeal. I'm not joking, I'm serious. Because when we put a film out, our first rating is PG, "general audience, parental guidance." Everybody thought it meant general practitioner. When you do something in the confines of a laboratory, it seems reasonable and right. Then you put it out in the public where all these people are milling around. They are not spending near the time attending to this that we are. They get a completely different impression.

I am saying I think the rating system is so overburdened with categories now, I don't know whether it can sustain another. I think that is my first impression.

My second impression is that if you have S.A. as an explanatory review, I think you rightly have to also list the other explanatory words of language, sensuality, violence, suicide or whatever else, all the other themes that might intrude on someone's consciousness in a darkened way.

So I'm saying to you, for the reasons that I have just explained to Mr. Rinzel, that I think one, not SA by itself, but the whole business of adding another category; and two, the explanatory words in the real world come down to a lot of difficulty. We come down to the objective of the rating system and the parent. I don't think there is any parent in the world that doesn't want to do the best for their children. They ought to give guidance not only on the movies their children see, but the television they watch, the books they read, the schools they go to and all the other things that go into constructing social views.

Chairman ROTH. Again, I agree with you on the importance of parental guidance, but I do have to say that it would be a cop out to try to put all the burden on them. I don't think you intend that. I think the industry has a responsibility to provide leadership in this area, because like you, I feel very strongly that the industry should act on a voluntary basis.

I think there are some very serious questions as to whether adequate information is being given to parents who want to determine in advance which movies their children should see. I would therefore urge you and those who serve with you to give this matter very, very careful consideration, because I think what we do expect from you is strong leadership in this area. I will be very candid with you.

I think we have an extraordinarily serious problem with drug abuse and glamorization of drugs.

I wish I knew what the answer was, but I do think that your industry and the groups you represent must play a very important role, and I would urge you to give these matters careful consideration.

Mr. VALENTI. Let me just respond to that. Forgive me, Senator, if I seemed I was being dismissive. I was not. I take what you say very seriously. I wouldn't have spent hours and hours preparing for this committee hearing if I didn't believe that what you were

doing isn't in the long-term benefits of this country. So I'm not dismissing it. I'm telling you how we look at it today, but it is something that we are giving a great deal of thought to.

Chairman ROTH. I appreciate that, and in closing, let me say that I would hope that some procedures might be set up where there might be some avenue to receive comments from the public, particularly parents groups. Again, I do congratulate the industry for anticipating the problem and grappling with it many years ago. I think that the proposal you announced today, of rewarding those who provide some leadership in this area, is a major step forward. I congratulate you and those responsible for it. We look forward to future progress, as well.

Thank you very much.

Mr. VALENTI. Thank you very much, Senator.

[Mr. Valenti's prepared statement, with attachments, follows:]

Statement of

Jack Valenti

President & Chief Executive Officer

Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.

and

Chairman

Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, Inc.

before the

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

October 24, 1985

My name is Jack Valenti.

I am President and Chief Executive Officer of the Motion Picture Association of America. The member companies of the MPAA are:

Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.
Walt Disney Productions
MGM/UA Entertainment Co.
Orion Pictures Corporation
Paramount Pictures Corporation
Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation
Universal City Studios, Inc.
Warner Bros. Inc.

I am also Chairman of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, whose member companies are:

Aaron Spelling Productions
CPT Holdings, Inc.
Stephen J. Cannell Productions
Columbia Pictures
Walt Disney Pictures
Embassy Communications
Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.
Leonard Goldberg Company
Lorimar Productions
MGM/UA
MTM Enterprises
Metromedia Producers Corporation
Orion TV Productions, Inc.
Paramount Pictures Corporation
Ray Stark Productions, Inc.
Sunrise Productions, Inc.
Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation
Universal City Studios, Inc.
Viacom Productions, Inc.
Warner Bros.
Witt/Thomas/Harris Productions

The work, Mr. Chairman, that your sub-committee is doing to illuminate the torment of drug abuse in this country is useful and appropriate. Such attention provokes a more sensitive public understanding of these darkly wounding frontal assaults being made on the society at large, shattering social values and squandering family disciplines.

Perhaps what I proffer you in this written testimony will also make a modest contribution to the body of knowledge about what the film and television industry is doing to redeem its obligation to the public we seek to entertain even as you and your colleagues fulfill your responsibilities to the public you have by solemn oath sworn to serve.

We in the film and television industry try with all the energy and wisdom we can summon to leaven our entertainment values with our own commitment of service.

I am pleased to recite for you positive steps, progressive and persistent steps, the film industry is taking to enlarge public understanding of the private dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

First, this morning I am pleased to announce a new initiative by our industry in this area -- the creation of the Creative Coalition Against Drug Abuse.

I am particularly proud to tell you that on its founding board sit the most influential decision makers in our industry. The purpose of our Creative Coalition will be to each year award laurels to those producers of film and television programs whose creative efforts most advance the goal of reducing the use of drugs among the young in this country.

There are other organizations in the field whose anti-drug efforts are producing results. We will look forward to working with all of them because their objectives and ours coincide. Our new group wants to focus on the creative writers, producers, directors whose work in film and television warrants a laurel wreath in the anti-drug abuse crusade.

I have attached a list of the board of the Creative Coalition to my remarks. The level of their status within our industry bespeaks the seriousness of the Creative Coalition's purpose.

Second, let me briefly expose for you the working of the voluntary film rating system, a partnership of the National Association of Theater Owners, the Motion Picture Association of America, and independent distribution. It was born on November 1, 1968. Its objective was clear and simple: to give advance cautionary warnings to parents so that parents could make more informed decisions about their young childrens' movie going habits. But that rating system is itself a fragile enterprise.

If parents did not choose to find out more about the rated films in the marketplace it was plain that no ratings system, however well intentioned, would be sufficient to achieve its objective. Parental responsibility is the root essential to a useful program of this kind. It was the film industry's conviction that this new, and at the time, revolutionary plan would be a redemption of our public responsibility.

Have we succeeded?

For seventeen years the Opinion Research Corporation of America has polled some 2,600 people nation-wide asking them if they found the rating system 'Very Useful' -- 'Fairly Useful' -- or 'Not Useful' in helping parents guide their childrens' movie going.

The newest poll, completed in September, 1985, reveals that of parents with children 12 and under, 73% found the rating system Very Useful to Fairly Useful, an alltime high approval level. Some 20% found it Not Useful, and the rest had no opinion. Of those parents with children under eighteen, there were 72% who approved highly of the rating program, with 22% finding it Not Useful. This latest poll correlates with the previous sixteen surveys.

By any gauge you choose to employ, this is an approval rating of landslide proportions. It persuades us that what we are doing to inform parents has warranted their overwhelming approval.

The rating system is open to everyone -- MPAA member films and non-member films alike. To date 37% of the more than 7000 films rated are being distributed by MPAA companies or their subsidiaries. The remainder, about 62%, come from non-MPAA member companies.

The ratings are decided by a rating board located in Los Angeles. It consists of seven persons, including a chairman.

I, and I alone appoint the chairman. I do so in my capacity as chairman of the rating system's Policy Review Committee -- the group comprised of representatives of MPAA, NATO and independent producers which decides the rules and procedures to be followed by the rating system. The rating board chairman in turn selects the members of the board.

There are no special qualifications for board membership except that one must love movies, possess mature judgment, and most importantly, have been a part of the parenting experience. They must be able to view a film as most parents might, deciding whether their younger children ought to see a particular film.

The board members view each film in its entirety and after a group discussion they vote on the rating. We do not allow anyone to sit in on meetings and discussions of the rating board. These discussions and the ballots that are cast detailing rating reasons are confidential, primarily because the members discuss and comment on each film in detail. Confidentiality encourages members to express their views in total candor.

The rating is decided by a majority vote.

A disgruntled producer has three options.

First, he can disagree with the rating but decide to accept it nonetheless.

Second, he could edit the film to bring it within a less restrictive rating category. It is not uncommon for a film to be revised by the producer and then resubmitted to the rating board several times in hopes of attaining a different rating.

Or, the producer could accept the rating and appeal it to the rating system Appeals Board -- the final arbiter of movie ratings.

The Appeals Board consists of 22 members, 9 representatives from MPAA member companies, 8 from the National Association of Theater Owners, and four from independent producers. I serve as a member and its chairman.

The Appeals Board meets in New York in quasi-judicial session to view the film in question. Following the screening the producer or his designee tells the Appeals Board members why he believes the rating board was incorrect, and a member of the rating board, usually the chairman, defends the rating. The two advocates then leave the room. In their absence, the Appeals Board members discuss the film and vote by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote is necessary to overturn the rating board.

Since 1968, 190 ratings have been appealed. The Appeals Board has sustained the rating board 101 times (53%); the decision by the rating board has been overturned 89 times (47%).

The rating board does not judge the quality or artistic value of a film, its story, the director or its stars. It leaves that to the critics and the audience.

What it does do is to give some cautionary information to parents to help them judge the suitability of a specific film. To that end, from the outset the rating system has divided the rating classifications into 2 broad divisions -- those that are unrestricted and those that are restricted as to children.

Today, with the adoption of PG-13 in July, 1984, there are 5 categories -- three unrestricted (G, PG, PG-13) and two restricted (R,X).

In fitting a film into a particular rating category, the raters use no computerized formula. Rather, they assess each film in light of a number of criteria, including, but not limited to, language, sex, violence nudity, drug use as well as various other content areas that will concern parents are also weighed in making rating decisions.

G: "General Audiences -- All ages admitted."

This is a film which contains nothing which would, in the view of the Rating Board, be offensive to parents if even their youngest children view it. The G rating is not a "certificate of approval," nor does it signify a children's film. Some profoundly significant films are rated G (for example, "A Man for All Seasons").

Some snippets of language may go beyond polite conversation but they are common every-day expressions. No stronger words are present in G-rated films. The violence is at an absolute minimum. Nudity and sex scenes are not present.

PG: "Parental Guidance Suggested; some material may not be suitable for children."

This is a film which needs to be examined or inquired about by parents before they let their children attend. The label PG plainly states that parents may consider some material unsuitable for their children, but the parent must make this decision.

Parents are warned against sending their children, unseen without inquiry, to PG-rated movies.

There may be some profanity in these films. There may be violence, but it is not deemed so strong that everyone under 17 need be restricted unless accompanied by a parent.

There is no explicit sex in a PG-rated film, although there may be some indication of sensuality. Brief nudity may appear in PG-rated films, but not anything beyond that.

The PG rating, suggesting parental guidance, is thus an alert for special examination of a film by parents before deciding on its viewing by their children.

Obviously the line is difficult to draw. In our pluralistic society it is not easy to make subjective judgments without

incurring some disagreement. So long as parents know they must exercise parental responsibility, the PG rating serves as a meaningful guide and as a warning.

PG-13: "Parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13. Some material may be inappropriate for young children."

PG-13 is thus an even sterner warning to parents to determine for themselves the attendance in particular of their younger children as they might consider some material not suited for them. Parents, by the rating, are alerted to be very careful about the attendance of their under-teenage children.

A PG-13 film is one which in the view of the Rating Board leaps beyond the boundaries of the PG rating, but does not quite fit within the restricted R category. In effect, the PG-13 cautions parents with more stringency than usual to give special attention to this film before they allow their 12-year-olds and younger to attend.

If nudity is extensive and largely sexually oriented, the film will not be found in the PG-13 category. If violence is rough or persistent, the film goes into the R (restricted)

rating. A film's single use of one of the harsher sexually-derived words, though only as an expletive, shall require the Rating Board initially to issue that film at least a PG-13 rating. But, more than one such expletive must lead the Rating Board to issue a film an initial R rating, as must even one of these words used in a sexual context. Drug use, either casual use or abusive, is fully considered.

PG-13 places larger responsibilities on parents for their children's moviegoing. PG-13 is designed to make these parental decisions easier for those films between PG and R.

R: "Restricted, under 17s require accompanying parent or guardian."

This film could contain some adult-type material respecting language, violence, nudity, sexuality, drug use, or other content. Parents are advised in advance that the film contains adult-type material and they take their children with this advisory clearly in mind.

The language may be rough, the violence may be hard, and while explicit sex is not to be found in R-rated films, nudity and lovemaking may be involved.

The R rating is thus strong in its advance advisory to parents as to the adult content of the film.

X: "No one under 17 admitted."

This is patently an adult film and no children are allowed to attend. Among the reasons for not admitting children to X-rated films are the accumulation of brutal or sexually connected language, or of explicit sex or excessive and sadistic violence.

As of September 30, 1985, the rating board has rated a total of 7036 feature films, which break down as follows:

| Rating | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| G | 900 | 12.9 |
| PG | 2523 | 35.9 |
| PG-13* | 60 | .8 |
| R | 3190 | 45.2 |
| X | 363 | 5.2 |

* Introduced July, 1984.

Third, the rating system is girding itself for sterner rating treatment of films in whose content is depicted the use of drugs.

From the outset, drug usage has been an important element considered by the members of the rating board in assessing the overall rating for a motion picture. Traditionally, the board members in their deliberations have given serious thought as to how parents would react to their children viewing depictions of drug use.

But the drug menace has convinced the sponsors of the rating system of the need to take even firmer action with respect to ratings accorded motion pictures containing drug usage.

To that end, the Policy Review Committee is now considering and will doubtless approve a new guideline for the Rating Board. The guideline is as follows:

> "In response to increasing parental concern for the drug menace in America, effective immediately no film that involves drug use will be rated less than PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned. Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13."

This new guideline means that any depiction of drug use will at a minimum result in a film being given a PG-13 rating, regardless of how limited the depiction may be, and irrespective of what else might be found in the film. Of course, the rating board may determine that a depiction of drug usage in a film warrants a rating more severe than a PG-13.

Fourth, there is an increasing volume of films and television programs and public service announcements which go to the heart of this problem by giving it more spacious visibility to the viewing public.

Here is a catalogue of what has been accomplished:

The motion picture and television industry have initiated a broad range of actions regarding drug and alcohol abuse. The activities include: 1) public service announcements and educational films for use in the schools; 2) drug treatment and referral programs, 3) substance abuse conferences and achievement awards for programming which "deglamorizes" drugs and alcohol; and 4) most importantly, numerous television programs, produced by MPAA and AMPTP member companies, which seek to present drug and alcohol abuse in a realistic and negative light.

1. Educational Films, Videos and Public Service Announcements

Member companies of the MPAA and the AMPTP have seen the opportunity available to them to aggressively take on the issue of drug and alcohol abuse by teenagers.

Disney Studios, for example, offers schools a broad selection of educational films and video tapes on drug and alcohol abuse aimed at varying age groups. "Muggers" for example, is a video narrated by Rosie Grier, showing how narcotics addiction leads to street crime and damages a community. "The High Road", "Kids and Drugs; the Reason Why", "Understanding Alcohol Use and Abuse" are other Disney educational videos widely used throughout our nation's schools.

Another educational tool used by our industry in its efforts to combat drug and alcohol abuse is the public service announcement. Over the last several years, Columbia Pictures, Orion, Warner Brothers, MGM/UA, and Paramount have all produced public service announcements featuring stars of television and motion pictures, warning against the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

2. Drug Treatment and Referral Services

A. The Entertainment Industry Referral and Assistance Center ("EIRAC").

On April 11, 1984, 150 senior executives and union officials from the entertainment industry gathered at the Burbank Studios to work on an industry wide program to deal with the problem of substance abuse. As a result of this meeting, the industry formed the Entertainment Industry Referral and Assistance Center to serve as an umbrella employee assistance program to serve all members of the entertainment industry and their families.

As part of its services, EIRAC offers strictly confidential counseling, referral and education services to those suffering from alcoholism and/or drug abuse. While it is a referral service, not a treatment center, EIRAC has operated a 24 hour, seven day a week hot line to assist employees and employers, individuals and families, with calls for help, appointments or information. It is administered by people in the industry for people in the industry. The center is funded solely by contributions from studios, networks, producers, and unions representing various aspects of the entertainment industry.

B. Motion Picture and TV Fund

Started five years ago, the Motion Picture and Television Fund sponsors an industry-wide drug referral and treatment program for the entertainment industry. The Fund's program involves guidance and counseling for drug addiction, management training programs, and referral services. The Fund has handled over 2000 cases over the last five years.

C. Individual Company Programs

In addition to industry-wide substance abuse programs, Columbia Pictures, MGM/UA, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., and Universal all have individual company programs for their employees and their families who may be experiencing the tragedy of drug or alcohol problems.

3. Substance Abuse Conferences and Achievement Awards

The motion picture and television industry has originated and assisted in a number of industry-wide substance abuse conferences. Beginning in 1984, with the Burbank Conference which spawned IERAC, continual efforts are being made to reach out to the medical community, the education community, and to federal, state and local agencies who can work with us to develop answers to our substance abuse problems.

In August of this year, our industry participated in a conference sponsored by the American Psychological Association entitled: "Substance Abuse and the Entertainment Industry: Inside and Outside".

On November 12, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers will join with the National Institute of Drug Abuse in sponsoring a conference on cocaine abuse prevention.

In addition to participating in industry wide conferences, our industry has spawned a number of excellent organizations which seek to recognize those motion pictures and television productions which help to raise the level of consciousness as to the horrors of drug dependency. The most prominent of these organizations, the Scott Newman Foundation, not only presents awards for television programming, it also produces its own educational films on drug use. I have attached a list of those Scott Newman Award Winning Television Programs produced by MPAA and AMPTP member companies.

In addition to the Scott Newman Foundation, the Entertainment Industries Council is working to bring the resources of the entertainment industry to the forefront of our fight against drug and alcohol abuse. It serves as a catalyst to enhance greater participation in a variety of public awareness campaigns to encourage the prevention of substance abuse, especially among youth.

4. Motion Picture and Television Programming which deglamorizes drugs.

In this perhaps most important area, I am particularly proud. Over the years, our members have produced motion pictures and television productions which have sought to deglamorize drugs. To give a sample of this programming, we have put together a short video which contains some examples of both motion picture and television deglamorization as well as some very entertaining public service announcements. A list of the specific shows and PSA's, along with the production company is also attached.

## CONCLUSION

We have no illusions about the depth and dangers of the drug abuse problem.

The fact that it has attracted the concern and personal involvement of the First Lady, Mrs. Reagan, is confirming evidence of the need to enlist every family in America in the cause of anti-drug abuse. It is a family worry, a disquieting school and church anxiety as well as a national fungus.

Those of us within the film and television industry are also parents who care passionately about the future conduct of our children, a future we surely know will be shaped by the values we have constructed in the home.

If what children see and hear on the screens of theaters and television sets is influential in helping form the judgments that the young find valuable, then we never want to allow our efforts to lag or languish.

We are proud of what we do, have done, and will do.

## Scott Newman Drug Abuse Prevention Awards

Four years ago, the Scott Newman Foundation was established with the principal objective of preventing chemical dependency among young people. The foundation makes annual awards to those responsible for bringing to television programs that accurately depict and do not glamorize substance usage. MPAA and AMPTP are proud that its members have produced several of the programs that have been recipients of the Scott Newman Drug Abuse Prevention Awards:

| Program | Episode | Producer |
|---|---|---|
| | 1984 | |
| Knot's Landing | "Reconcilable Differences" | Roundelay Prods. in Assoc. with Lorimar Prods. |
| | 1982-83 | |
| Quincy | "On Dying High" | Glen Larson Prods. in Assoc. with Universal TV |
| | 1981-82 | |
| Quincy | "Bitter Pills" | Glen Larson Prods. in Assoc. with Universal TV |
| WKRP in Cincinnati | "Pills" | MTM Enterprises. |

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Efforts of the Motion Pictgure and Television Industry to Combat Drug and Alcohol Abuse. Video Tape.

1. Gremlins PSA. Warner Bros. 1984.
2. Mr. T PSA. Warner Bros. 1984.
3. Fame PSA. MGM/UA 1984.
4. Facts of Life scene. Embassy Communications 1985.
5. Cagney & Lacey. Orion Pictures Corp. 1984-1985.
6. T. J. Hooker. Columbia Pictures 1985.
7. Midnight Express. Columbia Pictures 1978.
8. Desperate Lives scene. Lorimar Productions 1982.

Chairman ROTH. I'm delighted to introduce our next witness, who was supposed to be our first witness this morning. He is no newcomer to star wars. He has faced many battles in space on the immensely popular "Star Trek" TV series and film. In the course of his distinguished career, he has also faced battles on the industry streets in the series "T.J. Hooker." I know he appears today as a formidable player in the star war. I regret that the weather interfered with his getting here. When I met him a few minutes ago, he accused me of being responsible for the fog; not even the members of my family think I have that much power and authority.

Mr. Shatner, William Shatner, please come forward. I say we are delighted to have you here today and do regret the problems you encountered en route here today. It is our practice, before this subcommittee, that everyone must take the oath, so would you please stand and raise your right hand?

Do you solemnly swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. SHATNER. I do.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you.

Again, welcome, and please proceed.

## TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM SHATNER, TELEVISION AND FILM STAR

Mr. SHATNER. Well, thank you, Senator Roth. I think perhaps it was Foggy Bottom that held you responsible for it.

I would like to thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to make some remarks. As a national spokesperson for Pride, and as honorary chairman of a group called the Juvenile Justice Connection Project, I have learned that nothing, even the eradication of drug usage among young people, is beyond the reach of individuals who choose to take action rather than merely taking alarm.

How can we in the entertainment industry help? Well, we're not sociologists and law officers or doctors. But media stars have one special attribute which can be placed at your disposal: celebrity. There is no great honor in having celebrity. Most of us have it thrust upon us. Not unwillingly, I might add. But there can be great honor and constructive results in using that fame, using it to convey the most urgent message of our time. The terrorists are among us. They're on every street corner, in every school. They're selling time bombs in dime bags.

My career has brought me many pleasures, but nothing has held greater reward than the gift of clout, the clout to say something and actually have people listen. Today, for example, this access to the media and this access to people's curiosity has allowed me to sponsor effectively the great humanitarian ideas of others.

Many artists do this, and many who don't would like to. And my suggestion is that you set up a kind of clearing house to identify those celebrities who want to put their popularity to work in this cause and that you marry them to worthwhile national and grassroots projects dedicated to putting out the raging fires of nacotics addiction.

An interview here, an appearance there, I'm constantly amazed at the impact with which celebrity can deliver a deserving message. These performers are literate, concerned, and intelligent. But they rely on the experts in the field of antidrug combat to give them their lines and to give them their cues.

There is another important area in which Hollywood can contribute and which will be discussed here by others today: propagandizing the destructiveness of drug usage through actual content of the films. However, I do not feel you can achieve that through a ratings system. My opinion on that may be in a minority, since I am irrevocably opposed to any censorship. I am most strongly opposed to rating motion pictures. I believe ratings to be censorship at its most insidious in that it is seemingly a compromise, a semicensorship. I do not believe you can effect positive statements in motion pictures by censoring negative statements. You can't encourage film artists to incorporate strong antidrug material by punishing those misguided or unthinking instances in which characters or scenes imply that drug usage can be socially acceptable or even recreational. You can't inspire with a cattle prod.

You can, however, educate and facilitate. Establish seminars with the writers, the producers, the studio heads; convey the urgency of this crusade to them. Perhaps you may consider rewarding the real positive effort. People in Hollywood love awards. Give them awards; do it up big; encourage positive example.

I suggest this with some diffidence because it could look like special pleading for the creators of our "T.J. Hooker" television series.

This subcommittee recently surveyed the incidence of strong, positive statements on drug abuse on prime time entertainment shows over the past 4 years. I was proud that of the 25 cited episodes, 6, more than a quarter, were from the "Hooker" creators. They are doing their part to unhook the Nation, but it is rather depressing that 6 shows is 26 percent of the total. Six shows should represent 1 percent.

I think you have to help us carry our part of the load by giving information and motivation to the creators of the Nation's motion picture and television fare. Don't censor us, inspire us. Great directors get a lot out of us that way, and you are directing perhaps the most important drama of our time. Thank you.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you very much. Let me point out after having watched many of your TV series your success has not depended in any way on your using drugs in those films. Isn't that correct?

Mr. SHATNER. We are in the fortunate position of being a police show, and police do crack down on drug offenders, and that forms a large part of our material, a large number of our stories.

Also, I have tried in my own way not to drink and smoke unless absolutely necessary in a scene; gratuitous drug usage of any kind is something I have always tried to avoid portraying, unless the intention and effect of the scene is to show the resulting destruction and degradation.

Chairman ROTH. I congratulate you for your leadership in this area and wonder how we can use your example, your experience as a means of getting others to join this crusade, which is what I think it is.

Mr. SHATNER. Well, it is a crusade, and I agree with the testimony I have heard on television. I'm sure it has been spoken so far, and it will be spoken after I'm done, that it is the issue of the Nation in this time. I have been involved in a variety of charities over the years, and I have been asked to be part of numerous charities. So many that it's almost automatic that I put it aside after I refuse because the time is so limited.

And the means by which I have become connected with those groups that I am has been haphazard, through contact, personal contact, through a letter that moved me, through something I have seen on television or read in the newspaper, something inadvertent has touched me, and therefore, given me the impetus to connect myself with that particular charity.

I would think you would obtain a positive response to any offers coming from your office, a letter, a request, a contact of some kind to some celebrity. You see, it's one thing to be the actor, the leading actor in a motion picture or a television series and say the words that are written for you. We are given situations studios feel are popular and will get people to watch, dramas in which there is violence, sex. But it's another thing to be an individual and to utilize this gathered publicity that is connected to your name and to lend that to a cause as an individual. This is where we actors have real choice. And we need assistance in making the choice that will have positive effect.

I should think something coming from you, Senator Roth, would provoke a celebrity to lend his individual name to some worthy cause.

Chairman ROTH. If I understand what you are proposing, it is that the stars constitute a voluntary fire department.

Mr. SHATNER. Exactly.

Chairman ROTH. I would be happy to become involved and help in creating such a group. Of course, stars would make it more effective.

Mr. SHATNER. Well, most everybody in Hollywood lends their name to one or another good cause, but that direction would help organize this benevolent energy in some fashion.

Chairman ROTH. I should like to work with you on that approach. There is no question that the stars are role models for our young people, so that if we can harness their energy and names, it would be very helpful in attacking the problem of the glamorization of drugs.

I understand that you have brought a tape with you, we would be very happy to have you show it, if you wish.

Mr. SHATNER. Fine.

[Whereupon, at this point in the hearing, a videotape was shown.]

Chairman ROTH. Very good. We, again, appreciate the leadership role you are playing in this area. I do have one or two questions I would like to ask you.

Today, we have heard about proposals to provide more information on drugs in the films to the public and also to supply the reasons for the ratings. Would you care to comment on either of those proposals?

Mr. SHATNER. Well, I think it's a difficult task to rate those films, to convey that rating, and on what do you base it? How do you say this is unacceptable, and how do you say this is holding up the mirror to nature and this is what society is?

Is glamorization of drugs showing somebody doing drugs? Because it's happening, and I don't think, in all humility, that the movies are responsible for our Nation's morality or that they have a responsibility to show or deal with morality in this country. The movies, the media reflect, and if something's happening, then it is food for drama. Drama is meant to entertain and to enlighten, but I don't think it's meant to project a moral value. Whose morality—and by whose determination.

Somebody, therefore, has to, an individual, has to make that judgment as to whether some depiction of drug usage is acceptable or not acceptable. That's a tough one.

Chairman ROTH. Of course, I think what is being proposed is not necessarily giving a moral judgment, but basic information, so that a parent, particularly with respect to a child, can determine the content of the film. As you well know, there are a number of ratings now, but the parents, in many cases, don't know why a movie is rated PG–13.

Mr. SHATNER. Even the rating system as now constituted is flawed. On the one hand, you can't show forms of love, but you can show forms of violence or vice versa. You're in the area of one man's meat being another man's poison, and I'm not bringing up any new issue here. You all know it far better than I.

How do you condemn a movie like "The Big Chill" for showing somebody smoking a marijuana cigarette and not condemn somebody for taking two slugs of rye? Alcohol is a far more insidious drug. Why don't we deal with that, too? Smoking, what about smoking? How do you deal with it? How do you tell a child, "That's good and that's not good"? And we are back to what I know you have discussed ad nauseam: That it's the parents who must deal with the child and help him develop his own moral value.

Chairman ROTH. Again, I don't think the rating system is intended to instruct parents as to what action they take. Similarly, providing more information would not dictate parental action. I think the purpose of the ratings—and additional information supplied—is to enable the parent to make that decision.

Mr. SHATNER. I understand that, Senator Roth, but how do you deliver that information? How do you say that in this movie, somebody smokes a marijuana cigarette and that's not good? I mean, how do you say that? How do you say that in this movie, somebody gets drunk, but that's OK? I mean, how do you make that discernment, practically, I mean? What are the practicalities involved?

Chairman ROTH. On that specific point, there was an experiment, if you want to call it that, in Kansas City to see whether or not it was practical to provide additional information beyond the basic ratings. For example, "Atlantic City," exhibit No. 4, says, "This picture is rated R because of language, violence, use of drugs." As Mr. Valenti said, you can always give additional information, but this does provide some significant information for the parent who is trying to decide whether or not he wants his children under 17 to attend that movie.

I think we are all in agreement that it is not the purpose of ratings or classifications to render moral judgment; it is to provide information upon which to base such judgment. We have talked about the freedom to produce, and I think everyone agrees that we don't want censorship; the individual producers and writers are free to work.

All that is being proposed is the furnishing of some basic information as to the content so that at least there is some basis for the family to make those judgments. This is a matter we are not going to resolve today. We feel very strongly that this is something that should come from the private sector, because we don't want to run afoul of the first amendment.

I do have to make one other comment. It is a personal point of view, and there are those that disagree with me. I don't think that the movies, the media, the playwrights can necessarily say 100 percent that the moral tone in this Nation does not reflect what they do. I personally think that people in public life such as yourself are role models. The fact is that movies have an impact, not only on the young, but on society at large. That is the reason I am pleased that people like yourself and others in the industry are willing to provide some leadership in this area. I think that is important. We don't want to get into censorship, but neither can we ignore the fact that many of these individuals and groups are role models.

I want to tell you how much I appreciate your being here today and for the leadership role you are playing, and I would very much like to work with you on trying to develop this group to provide further aid. Thank you very much for being here.

Mr. SHATNER. I look forward to it. Thank you.

Chairman ROTH. Mr. Heffner.

Our next witness is Mr. Richard Heffner, the chairman of the Classification and Rating Administration, the board that rates the films. Mr. Heffner is also university professor of communications and public policy at Rugers and the moderator of two weekly public affairs TV series entitled "The Open Mind" and "From the Editor's Desk." He is an American historian, the author of "A Documentary History of the United States," and the editor of Tocqueville's "Democracy in America."

Mr. Heffner, would you please rise and raise your right hand?

Do you swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. HEFFNER. Yes, sir; I do.

## TESTIMONY OF RICHARD HEFFNER, CHAIRMAN OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND RATING ADMINISTRATION

Chairman ROTH. Thank you for being here, Mr. Heffner. It is my understanding you have no prepared statement. I don't know whether at this time you would like to make any remarks.

Mr. HEFFNER. No, sir. I think I could serve you best by responding to your questions.

Chairman ROTH. Can you tell us whether drugs are currently considered when the movie rating board makes a rating determination?

Mr. HEFFNER. Yes, indeed. They are.

Chairman ROTH. Can you tell us how drugs are considered?

Mr. HEFFNER. Well, No. 1, no film that contains any drug use at all will be put into a family rating; that is, no film with any reference to drugs will be given a G.

Beyond that, as with all of the other categories, sex, violence, nudity, language, et cetera, drug use is measured for the ratings, in terms of our educated estimate as to what most parents will consider the appropriate rating. So in that regard, it fits into all of the things that we believe should inform our ratings.

Chairman ROTH. It is my understanding that in your rating ballot you do not have any specific category called "drugs," is that correct?

Mr. HEFFNER. Correct.

Chairman ROTH. What difference would it make if you did have such a specific category?

Mr. HEFFNER. I don't know that it would make an enormous difference, but it is a change that I think would not reflect adversely upon the rating system. I think we could do that. It does conform to our ratings, I want to assure you of that. Given the concern that has been expressed, we can change that very simply.

Chairman ROTH. As you have heard this morning, and I am sure you already know, there are many people that feel it would be very helpful if your group would make available the reasons for the classifications. What are your views on that matter?

Mr. HEFFNER. Well, it's quite clear that there are a number of people who feel that way, and in your statement to Mr. Valenti as he left, you hoped that that matter would be under consideration, and he assured you that it would be by the proper people in the industry, meaning in the instance of consideration, the policy review committee.

Chairman ROTH. We felt that based on the little we know about it, the program conducted in Missouri was quite promising and indicated the ability to provide meaningful information without having to go into too much detail.

What are your impressions of that particular experiment, and might it not be worthwhile to build upon it.

Mr. HEFFNER. I guess my answer, Senator, in brief, is yes, to your last question. It would be quite worthwhile to build upon it.

Chairman ROTH. I am very happy to hear that. We think that it is quite promising and would look forward to your building on that experiment. Let me ask you this question.

As chairman of the rating board, can you tell us whether it's feasible to provide the reasons for the rating to the newspaper or other agencies for publication?

Mr. HEFFNER. I think, Senator, the point is that the rating board can easily provide the information. I think Mr. Valenti has indicated the great difficulty he believes is involved in disseminating that information. But we did, in the Kansas experiment, do just as you suggest.

Chairman ROTH. There are some newspapers that currently publish descriptions. For example, here is a copy of a U.S. Today article that says, about the movie "Teen Wolf," "PG, mild sexual situation, drug reference."

First, am I correct in assuming that this is the critic's guess and not your reason for the rating?

Mr. HEFFNER. Yes, sir.

Chairman ROTH. Would you say that newspaper critics are successful when they state what they think are the reasons for the rating?

Mr. HEFFNER. Sometimes yes, and sometimes, I know very much for sure that they're not.

Chairman ROTH. Also, can you tell us whether it's feasible and practical to create an automatic rule, such as the one described in the Parade article, that movies which favorably depict illegal drug use will be rated R or X?

Mr. HEFFNER. Sir, the question of what public attitudes are there, that matter is most important to us. What informs our ratings always is the question of parental attitudes, and we try always to make the right kind of educated estimate as to what they are.

What I was impressed with was the figure of 90 percent of the self-selected respondents to Parade wanting to make those pictures X. I think that is not true of parents generally. In terms of the information that Mr. Valenti has supplied about our own "ratings," how the public has commented upon what we do, and from what we perceive from other sources, I really don't believe that "Terms of Endearment" or a great many of the other films that were listed as prodrug would have been appropriately rated X.

If we did believe that, sir, we would have rated them X. I noticed at the beginning of the film that there were three X's to start "Terms of Endearment." I hope that that was not the committee's editorial comment upon what our rating should have been.

Chairman ROTH. No. No; that wasn't intended.

Let me ask you a couple of other questions, and I will ask Mr. Rinzel to ask any questions. I noticed that according to the figures of Mr. Valenti, that the appeals board had overturned roughly 50 percent of the ratings appealed. Why the disagreement? What were the factors that would lead to a rather high number of changed ratings?

Mr. HEFFNER. Those figures, I think, Senator, are somewhat deceptive. They indicate the total number of times that ratings were overturned. They don't indicate that in most of those instances, the original ratings were themselves automatically R for a word or two of hash language. They did not reflect real decisions by the rating board but, rather, the so-called automatic language rule, over which the rating board has no control.

I think if you went back—during my tenure, at any rate—to the matter of overturns on appeals, you would find the actual percentage to be about 12 percent for overturning the rating board's real decisionmaking. That's a strong record of agreement.

Chairman ROTH. Some critics of the industry have indicated that the industry itself is more concerned, or some members of it, with making money than with the accuracy of the ratings. Has your group, individually or together, every been under any pressure from the industry to give a specific rating?

Mr. HEFFNER. Not really improper pressure very often, Senator, but there isn't any question that in all of my long life, I have never

been in a situation where, quite obviously, there has been as much pressure, for very good reason.

But, the real question, I think, is how do we respond to that pressure? And that, I think, is answered by the fact that by and large, we stick to our guns.

If there is an opportunity for appeal, we can be overturned. We consider very carefully the ratings before we give them. We're always willing to look at a film again. But the point is, the judgments, the six parents, the seven of us make, are judgments removed from the question of box office receipts, and they have to be. So that there is pressure, of course. There are, I gather, many dollars at stake. But do we succumb to that pressure? No, sir, not in my years there.

Chairman ROTH. Why are the decisions made behind closed doors? As I understand it, the procedure is for your organization to meet in private, without the public having access. Is that correct?

Mr. HEFFNER. Yes; what the origin of that was, I don't know. But I certainly support the notion that the members of the rating board ought to be free, perhaps from the very kind of pressure that you suggest, from even more pressure than there is.

Our discussions and our votes are conducted in private, and I think it is appropriate for that to be the case so that the kinds of improper pressure that might be brought upon members as they vote cannot be brought. Mr. Valenti was quite correct in saying that he stands as a barrier between us and those who are dissatisfied with what we do. By and large, we have managed not to get more than one or two companies angry with us at any one time.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask you this: You may have heard me raise the question of conflict of interest. Do you see any or a more significant role in the process for the public or public interest groups, particularly those representing parents? Do you think they are adequately represented on the rating or appeals board? Do you think there would be merit in recommendations that such groups be included? Or do you think that there should be some kind of advisory committee to your organization? Would that be of any service?

Mr. HEFFNER. Senator, every member of the rating board is a parent. The single most important qualification is that you have had the parenting experience, which annoys, frequently, those people who would like to be on the board who have been wonderful aunts or uncles but haven't had the parenting experience. So that each and every vote cast on the rating board is cast by a parent, No. 1.

No. 2, we go to the local parents and teachers association—because of our location, in California—and solicit from it each year or every other year suggestions for members of the rating board. And for, I suppose, 6 or 7 or 8 years now, we have had among our members people who have been nominated by the California State PTA, so that the parents are there.

About the appeals board, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on that. I'm an advocate before the appeals board. I really shouldn't be talking about the makeup of the jury.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask you this question. It is my understanding that the majority, if not all the members come, say, from

the Los Angeles area or primarily the Los Angeles area. Would there be any value in a more geographical representation on the grounds that there are different moral standards in different regions?

Mr. HEFFNER. Well, I'm not known as a California lover, and I have argued before the appeals board that there is more to this Nation than those two islands of Manhattan and Beverly Hills, but I want to assure you that our members do come, to the extent that it's possible, from around the country. We have particularly brought in people, well, three recent members of the board, a librarian and professors from far away universities on leave. If we go through the present group, one is Canadian born; one is a Texan; one comes from Illinois; one is an Army brat, literally from all over; two were born in California; but these people generally come from around the country.

Now, the fact of the matter is, for practical purposes, they are living right now, except for the chairman, in California. Yes, if we could draw more upon Missouri and Georgia and your State and many other States, we would do so. We do solicit recommendations from other States. But they have to be for people willing to live in California for a year or two.

Chairman ROTH. Mr. Rinzel.

Mr. RINZEL. Mr. Heffner, do you have any opposition to making reasons for the rating public? Is there anything unfeasible about doing that? What is your view?

Mr. HEFFNER. I think the only fair way to answer that, in terms of our offering the reasons for our ratings, no, I don't have any opposition or see anything unfeasible about doing that. But in terms of dissemination, and Mr. Valenti and I have talked about this for many years, there are difficulties, and I respect those difficulties. The fact of the matter is, we know why we have rated films; we can say why. To get that information to the public in an intelligible way is another problem.

Mr. RINZEL. In the Kansas and Missouri experiment that information was made available to the public, was it not?

Mr. HEFFNER. Yes, sir; for a very limited area, and for a limited period, we did so.

Mr. RINZEL. Does that not demonstrate convincingly that it is feasible, possible, practical to do so?

Mr. HEFFNER. I think so. If it is a matter for my colleagues and me, the work that we have to do, that's certainly feasible. Other people have other perspectives, as you have heard here.

Mr. RINZEL. What is your view of the proposed SA rating?

Mr. HEFFNER. Well, I was honored to be preceded by Mr. Shatner. I was going to ask him for his autograph for my kids years ago when they used to watch him, and for me and my wife who watch him every week now. I thought he made an important point here that relates to the SA, to a substance abuse rating. And the Senator said basically the same thing. We are not in the business in the rating system of moralizing of or punishing or rewarding films in moral terms.

I don't think there is a parent on the rating board right now who doesn't think that the use of drugs is basically the equivalent of the abuse of drugs. I would hate for us to be in a situation in which

we were distinguishing between use and abuse. I don't think that that should be the province of the rating board.

Mr. RINZEL. Given the fact that the rating board is supposed to reflect parental values about what most parents would want a movie to be rated or how they would want a movie to be rated, what steps do you take to gauge parental values, and could you do a better job in that area?

Mr. HEFFNER. I'm glad you put in the last question, too. Could we do a better job, sure, we could do a better job. I don't think of anything in the world that we couldn't do a better job at. The steps we do take, of course, relate essentially to our dependence on the exhibitors: I think the most important people in all of this are the people at the theaters themselves, who know what the response of parents is to specific ratings.

I think Mr. Valenti's use of those statistics is a very appropriate use, that by and large our own "rating"—approval, disapproval—is getting better, which must indicate that we're not making quite as many mistakes as our critics would say.

Mr. RINZEL. Couldn't that survey be expanded, though, to try to get to some more specific information about how parents feel about the rating system rather than, simply, "I approve," "I disapprove" the current rating system?

Mr. HEFFNER. Sure.

Mr. RINZEL. Would you propose that to Mr. Valenti and see if that could be done? Have you done so?

Mr. HEFFNER. I would suggest that it has been proposed to him already.

Mr. RINZEL. I don't have any further questions, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you very much for being here with us. We think you head a most important organization, and we do hope that we can work with you in the future.

Mr. HEFFNER. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman ROTH. We now have Marvin Goldman, who is senior partner of K.B. Theaters here in Washington. Mr. Goldman has served as president of the National Association of Theatre Owners, and as a member of the local chapter of NATO. Mr. Goldman has been in the theater business since 1947.

Mr. Goldman, would you raise your right hand. Do you swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. GOLDMAN. I do.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you. Welcome, and we appreciate your being here with us today. Proceed.

## TESTIMONY OF MARVIN GOLDMAN, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE OWNERS

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, sir.

Since this hearing has been long and basically nothing I have to say will shed any new light on the matter, let me briefly say that the position of the National Association of Theatre Owners is that we are all in favor, completely in favor of the motion picture code, the voluntary code, and rating system.

For many years, during my tenure as national president, which dates back to 1977 through 1980, we have agitated, pushed the code and rating authority to provide more information to the public. Now, I wish I could say that this was done purely for altruistic and noble motives. It has been done, frankly to get the monkey off our back, because the more information that the public has, the less shocked they're going to be when their child comes back and says, "Mommie, I saw this in the movie at my local theater the other day."

We want the parents armed with this information. We think that it's only the right and proper thing to do, and in a society that can put a man on the moon, surely we should be able to devise a system that says, mild violence, gratuitious violence, excessive violence or whatever the language should be. But I believe that the motion picture, as in any other form of retail advertising, should have a truth-in-labeling provision, and I think we ought to tell the parents, we ought to warn of any situation that exists in a movie so that a parent can have that information and make the intelligent or informed decision.

Briefly, that is our position, sir.

Chairman ROTH. I congratulate you, and I agree with you. I think you have put it very well. The truth-in-labeling should be the goal. I gather from what you are saying, then, that you don't agree with those who have argued that the reasons for the rating should not be made public?

Mr. GOLDMAN. No, sir, I do not. I would take exactly the opposite position.

Chairman ROTH. What can be done to help bring that about? Because I think you are absolutely correct. In fact, I would like to read from your written statement. You say, "We have argued for years that the public is entitled to know the reason a picture receives the rating P–G, PG–13, R, or X."

Certainly, a parent should be informed beforehand if a picture has excessive violence, nudity, drug abuse, or concerns itself with subjects most of us would rather our children not see.

You don't see that as an impossible goal?

Mr. GOLDMAN. No, sir. No; I do not. The fact that we have done it in a limited area in the Kansas-Missouri area shows that it can be done. Now, sure, there are problems that are incumbent upon a system, and not everything is going to be correct, and there will be people that—or pictures that fall through the cracks.

But you show me an arbitrary system of any type that doesn't have places where people can fall through the cracks. Some pictures will be done an injustice, but in the main, the purpose is to inform. That is the intent of the system, and the more information that we give, the more the system is going to work.

Chairman ROTH. Your organization is part of the group that sponsors the rating system? Is that correct?

Mr. GOLDMAN. That is right, sir.

Chairman ROTH. Is your group as a whole supportive of that?

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, our group as a whole, yes, is supportive of the code and rating authority as it was called, and its name has changed now.

But we are completely in accord. Once again, Senator, not necessarily as altruists or of all good motives. Frankly, I think a great deal of this was started to keep the Government off our backs, to keep local censor boards, city, State, county censor boards from proliferating. I think the industry took a wise and a proper and a good move in setting up to inform parents to create a voluntary system to do two things: Inform parents, the first purpose; and to keep the Government or governments from imposing solutions to this problem.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask this question: Since your industry is a key factor in the success of the movie industry, why can't your group prevail in this matter and get the change of practice?

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, Senator, why can't you get gun legislation passed?

Chairman ROTH. I am sorry I asked you that. [Laughter.]

Mr. GOLDMAN. I am sorry you asked your question. [Laughter.]

There are pressures. There are motives. Mr. Valenti, whom I have the greatest respect, and we have been colleagues and adversaries for many years, we represent different things. We are advocates from a different point of view. We try to work together to form a cohesive organization. The exhibitors want more information. Mr. Valenti is an advocate for a group of people who, frankly, for their own reasons, want to give less. They don't want to be labeled. They don't want to be classified. They don't want——

Chairman ROTH. Does that hurt the box office?

Mr. GOLDMAN. Now you are speaking as an exhibitor, the question?

Chairman ROTH. As exhibitor or not.

Mr. GOLDMAN. No, I don't think it does whatsoever. I think the only thing that hurts the box office, unfortunately, is the ranges, the two extremes with respect to film, the G pictures, which is unfortunately almost like a kiss of death, which means this is like Pabulum, the public perception is completely wrong about that, and the X picture, where the public conceives that that has to be pornography. "Midnight Cowboy" was not pornography. It really wasn't pornography. If "Midnight Cowboy" today, if it was put in for a rating I don't think would have an X rating. Time changes. The board does change.

The board was represented by Mr. Heffner. I was on that reform policy committee for years. We respond to things. One of the yokes that Mr. Heffner operates under is the automatic language rule, frankly, which was under my urging, because we had so many responses from various parts of the country, the Southwest, the Midwest and the North-Central States, that we fought our way through and imposed this automatic language rule, which has come back to haunt a lot of people.

So that we are responsive to our customers. We're the ones on the firing line. We're the ones who hear from the people, "My God, how can you show that?"

Chairman ROTH. Mr. Goldman, I appreciate your forthrightfulness, and I would hope that you would continue your interest and fight to make more information available. Maybe I can be more successful in my legislation as you are in your efforts to achieve your goals.

Thank you very much.
Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.
[Mr. Goldman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARVIN GOLDMAN

Senator Roth and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marvin Goldman, a resident of Washington,D.C. and former President and Chairman of the Board of NATO (the National Association of Theatre Owners). I hope I do not confuse when I use the acronym NATO -- just think of us as the NATO that causes you very little trouble and you should be able to make the distinction.

NATO is a trade association whose numbers represent approx. 11,000 screens in America. The remainder are independent exhibitor organizations and individual theatre owners whose interests, in the main, coincide with NATO on those major issues effecting the motion picture industry.

Although the specific problem of drug abuse has not been addressed by NATO, I believe I can positively state that the great majority of exhibitors across this land are completely in accord with the program to deglamorize drugs and would cooperate with efforts in that direction, as long as they do not breach first amendment guarantees.

We feel strongly that the morals and standards of American youth should be properly set in the home. For too long we parents have neglected our responsibilities to set ethical values for our children on the grounds that we're too busy. We have abdicated our responsibilities to others -- the teachers, clergymen, television, schoolmates, movies, and all forms of mass communication which are constantly teaching our children so called "contemporary values."

It is our opinion that if drugs are an integral part of a story we should not emulate the ostrich and pretend they don't exist. We are completely in favor of freedom of expression, but freedom also means responsibility to present the truth. Show what you will, but show it fairly with all its warts. Show the truth about drugs, violence and other subjects. Show the truth about these subjects and we in the exhibition industry will make every effort to tell you what you are going to see when you buy a ticket at our box office.

Exhibition, I'm pleased to say, recognized this problem many years ago. Some states and cities had censor boards (a concept which is anathema to most freedom-loving people,) others nothing. To answer this need, we in Washington created a system to inform parents about picture suitability for their children. We published the ratings promulgated by such disparate organizations as the Legion of Decency, the National Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Council of Churches. We tried to give parents the information so that they could make informed decisions as to which films were suitable for their children.

Following the lead set by progressive exhibitors, the motion picture industry created a Code and Rating Authority a voluntary organization whose entire purpose was to supply parents with valid information as to contents of pictures. I stress again, the labeling of pictures by symbol is purely and simply a voluntary device to supply information to parents. It does not condemn nor does it condone. It simply states that some pictures are not suitable for young people and that parents should be aware! Purely an information system for responsible parents to alert them to the fact that there is in the subject movie a scene or scenes, a subject or subjects that might not be suitable for impressionable youngsters.

This system has worked very well for a number of years in America to the extent that the rating code symbols have become part of our lexicon and are used to indicate degree in the American idiom. Bearing in mind that this is a purely voluntary system, that film producers are not required to obtain ratings, that theatres are not required to enforce them, and that the media are not required to display them, I think the industry should be most proud of its efforts.

However, we of NATO have a strong desire to see the system strengthened and improved to provide more detailed information to the parent. We have argued for years that the public is entitled to know the reason a picture receives its rating -- PG, PG-13, R, or X. Surely a parent should be informed before hand if a picture has excessive violence, nudity, drug abuse,

or concerns itself with subjects most of us would rather our children not see.

Many proposals have been offered to accomplish this and most have been found wanting. Should "The Longest Day", the story of June 6, 1944, the invasion of Europe, been labeled "V" for violence? How does one differentiate between the violence implicit in the story of war and the gratuitous violence we find on our screens, movie and TV every day?

An arbitrary system, by its very nature, creates a wide range of things that don't fit. As an example, Sue Lyon, who played the role of "Lolita" in the film made of the Nabakov novel, was not allowed into a theatre to see herself on the screen unless accompanied by a parent or accompanying adult. This is patently absurd.

Fairness demands a system that sets parameters and allows judgment calls depending on theme, treatment, and above all the good taste of the creator of the film. Let's not set a rigid series of arbitrary guidelines imposed by either governmental or non-governmental authority. Let us tell the parents of America exactly why this picture is rated PG-PG13-R or X, let's not equivocate, let us give total information. Then we can set the entire proposition in the hands of the final arbitrators, the parents of America. They have the ultimate responsibility for the complete education of their children.

Let's tell all about the content of motion pictures and of TV shows. Show the misery caused by drugs. Let the public decide what they want to see and remain confident that in the end the truth will prevail.

Chairman ROTH. We will recess while I go down and vote. We will take the panel up as soon as I return.

[At this point, Chairman Roth left the hearing room. A brief recess was taken. Members of the committee present at time of recess: Senator Roth. At this point, Chairman Roth entered the hearing room.]

Chairman ROTH. The committee will please be in order.

We will next hear from a panel of witnesses who represent parents and religious organizations across the Nation.

First, we'll hear from James Wall, editor of Christian Century Magazine and vice chairman of the Communications Commission of the National Council of Churches. Mr. Wall has lectured and published widely on the subject of film and theology.

Next, we will hear from Dr. Marsha Keith Schuchard. Dr. Schuchard has helped to found the Parent Resource Institute for Drug Education. She has published and spoken often on the subject of drugs and the need for education about their evil effects. She has also served as a consultant to the National Institute for Drug Abuse.

And finally, we are pleased to hear from Bishop Norbert Gaughan, bishop of Gary, IN, and past chairman of the Communications Committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

I welcome all of you and apologize for the lateness of the hour; you missed lunch. Sorry that you have to suffer through.

Will you please rise and raise your right hands? Do you swear the testimony you will give before this subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. WALL. I do.

Bishop GAUGHAN. I do.

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I do.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you. Please be seated.

Bishop Gaughan, you are to the left. Should we start with you and work to the right?

## TESTIMONY OF BISHOP NORBERT F. GAUGHAN, U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE; JAMES WALL, EDITOR, CHRISTIAN CENTURY MAGAZINE; AND MARSHA KEITH SCHUCHARD, PH.D., CO-FOUNDER, PARENTS RESOURCE INSTITUTE FOR DRUG EDUCATION

Bishop GAUGHAN. It is up to you.

Thank you.

I have been a Roman Catholic priest for almost 40 years, a bishop for 10 years, and I have been on the move already almost 50 years. I have served on the committee for communications for the last 5 years, and I wish I could appeal to your hearts the way Jack Valenti did by saying I have three children about whom I'm concerned, but obviously, I can't. [Laughter.]

However, I am concerned about children, not just Catholic children, but also all children of this land, our greatest treasure.

Mr. Valenti also should have been a preacher, because the ideal world of the motion picture rating system he described sounds like some descriptions of heaven by preachers, which have nothing to do with reality.

Those spots he showed, too, are of great interest. They should be—were nice for the children, rather the parents of the children, because the children are going to be out watching the R-rated movies in the theaters while the spots are being shown. He was also wrong on statistics.

For example, USA Today was quoting the U.S. News and World Report saying these two statistics: More than one-half of the projected $4 billion worth of movie tickets sold this year will be bought by patrons aged 10 to 24. Also, last years, 60 percent of the movies made in the United States were R. Somebody is seeing those R movies, and it's not just all the adults, and therefore, a lot of the movie rating system, it is my proposal, is not used so much to guide parents as a way to sell movies. It really may sometimes be used precisely only for that purpose.

Let me say that we have been in the business of movie ratings—the U.S. Catholic Conference—since 1936. Under my direction, about 3 years ago, we changed our rating system. We moved from that old C, condemned, to when we say morally objectionable, and then we give a listing or a statement why this is objectionable.

We send film reviews and classifications out to over 150 Catholic newspapers in the country, and we send capsules of these reviews for those who can't carry the whole article. We believe that in every case, it is necessary to indicate the rationale upon which the rating is based, and we don't want Government control. We think, however, that somebody better get up and start taking notice of what movies in this particular area are doing to our young people.

Mr. Goldman was right: They started the movie system, the rating system, when the motion picture industry in the 1960's had fallen on very bad days. Television was coming in, there were very many foreign films coming in, and they started to move to what they call "adult material." I resent, by the way, X-rated movies being called adult material. There's nothing adult about them.

When they announced their system in 1968, we, the U.S. Catholic Conference, went along with it. We said it's consistent with the rights and obligations of free speech and artistic expression.

But by 1970, we started saying, "Hey, they're not really doing their job; it's not working." For example, in that year, they said that they were going to eliminate some kinds of subjects, showing violence, and since that time on, the violence ration has been increasing to a point now where that is also something we're all concerned about.

We think that the product is not being advertised honestly. It is being mislabeled. Someone out there in Hollywood thinks that we will make the evaluation of what the traffic can bear, how far can we go and get away with it without being taken into a court of law on a charge of obscenity or whatever.

They, in fact, said, "Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying antisocial activities and criminal activities in which minors participate or are involved."

That's gone down the drain. As a result, we said maybe we should say we don't go along with that system at all. In fairness to the MPAA, we should note we are invited from time to time as an observer on that appeal board spoken of by Mr. Heffner.

We think also that the PG–13 was really a ploy. It really didn't help any. What it did was, before that, R was restricted or under 17 years old. Therefore, from PG–13, they have increased their audience from 13 to 17 that they can sell their R-rated movies to. It's a transparent ploy to exploit the young for crass commercial purposes.

We have been through the movies that we have seen. All of them, and I simply want to come up and say where we, the U.S. Catholic Conference would hope something could be done. We don't want any more ratings, labels. They have tinkered from the beginning, since 1968. They have gone from mature audiences to PG and now the addition of PG–13.

We think, first of all, the meaning of the rating has to be widely publicized. We are very sensitive to this need, and we have experienced it directly ourselves. If you read the book, "Final Cut" by Stephen Venbow, he shows you how they jockey in order to get an R rating, because that means much more money in the box office. Somebody said greed is not enough. That may apply to some aspects of the motion picture industry.

Second, we think that the MPAA should really apply the current ratings as they were intended, not as they have been led to kind of ameliorate and change. We believe that there should be an effective self policing mechanism at the box office. I agree with Senator Nunn that when Valenti said 20 percent slippage, we believe it's 80 percent slippage. We agree with him.

We also think that giving information to the parents is absolutely essential. Parents will be the arbitrators of what their children will see in the motion picture houses of America. They need information in order to make that decision, and they are not getting that information.

Finally, I would like to remove this whole threat of censorship. Censorship has nothing to do with it. For example, if I'm a diabetic, when I go to a store, I can see on the label what's in that product. I say, "That's not for me, but this, I can take."

Well, that's all we want. It's not—it's called labeling. Tell us. I don't want you to say, now, there is 20 percent sex scenes, 10 percent drug scenes, or anything, but somewhere, there should be information that when a parent picks up the paper says, "Oh, that; well, no, we don't attend those kinds of movies."

I thank you, Senator, and I thank all of your staff for allowing me this opportunity.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you.

Do you want to continue, please?

Mr. WALL. My name is James Wall, Senator. I'm the editor of Christian Century Magazine in Chicago, and I appear before this committee this morning in that capacity. I also appear as a person who has taught courses in film criticism and religion for various theological seminaries in the country.

I also appear as one who, 17 years ago, in 1968, initially met with Jack Valenti and other members of the MPAA and representatives of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations at the time of the establishment of the rating system.

I have been a long-time strong supporter of the rating system, because I believe strongly in the need for a voluntary system to avoid

censorship. At the same time, I believe in the right of the artist to do what it is he or she wishes to do in films.

But having given that kind of freedom to the industry, I think information, as the bishop has just stressed, is absolutely crucial. Information is the bottom line as we deal with the rating system.

For the past 8 years, I have served as a chairman of a subcommittee of the National Council of Churches, the major protestant organization in the country, which relates to the film industry on general topics, with a special concern for the rating system. In this capacity, we meet periodically with Mr. Valenti, with Mr. Heffner, and with members of the National Association of Theatre Owners. I think you know and we all know that the name of the game in their profession, as in politics, is often pressure. We have hoped to be able to bring pressure to bear on them from the public, because they respond to pressure.

As Mr. Goldman suggested earlier, the only reason the rating system was set up was to avoid censorship. In 1968 a Supreme Court ruling in Dallas, TX, said, in effect, that local communities could separate children from adults, and the rating system was born as a result of fear of censorship.

I also fear it, and yet information is not adequately being provided by the motion picture rating system. Some time ago we advocated to the MPAA that the PG–13 rating be considered a restrictive rating. We talked at length to Mr. Valenti about this. He finally, as you know, created PG–13. That is informational, and that is valuable. But we still feel that there would be considerable merit in making the 13 rating a restricted rating, because it is simply not enough to give just that information. Restriction would be even more helpful.

But at least that does give information. The PG–13 does provide information to the parent.

Over the last few years, we have also stressed to Mr. Valenti the very thing that has been discussed at great length this morning, namely, the addition of a short phrase to be added to the ratings to explain whey they were given. We have heard a lot of discussion about this. I don't need to add a lot of detail to you, other than to say I simply do not accept Mr. Valenti's point that it is hard to do, because Mr. Heffner, I think, would tell you that they have reasons for giving something PG–13, R, and X. And PG, and they could say what that is in very simple phrases.

There have been examples of that by the MPAA itself. The National Council of Churches as an experiment, conducted its own rating classification provides, additional information to the classification listings, and gave that to the MPAA. It can be done.

Parents are concerned about violence, about nudity, about language, about explicit sexual activity, and to the point of these hearings, parents are concerned about the use of drugs in films. I would not advocate a separate rating category for drug use, but I would strongly urge that drug use be added as a phrase telling you what is in these films—violence, nudity, language, and so forth.

This is information. This information could be supplied with the ratings. It could appear in the newspaper advertising, perhaps not in the smaller ads, but certainly in the larger ads.

As has been mentioned several times, the casual use of marijuana, the casual use of cocaine has been prevalent in recent film. "Poltergeist" was one that was cited as a particularly abhorrent use of marijuana, because it's in a film that does, in fact, appeal to the younger audiences, and yet here are the parents turning to pot as a way of relaxing and making love.

In "The Big Chill," you have pot being used as a way of reminiscing about the younger days. I think it is crucial that information be provided that tells the parents drug use is in this film. I would call this the inhibition factor. I honestly believe that directors are careless and lazy when they turn to the use of drugs as a shortcut to say something about the content of a person's life.

If they know their film will be labeled drug use, my guess is they will look to other means of conveying that same idea. It would be an inhibiting factor. So I hope that these hearings will apply the pressure that the industry knows how to relate to in doing just that, adding the information that would include drug use.

Thank you very much.

Chairman ROTH. Thank you.

Dr. Schuchard.

Ms. SCHUCHARD. Yes; I called my written testimony a clear case of pediatric exploitation, because it bothers me that we see Mr. Valenti and other representatives of the movie industry hiding behind first amendment privileges. Basically, we are looking at a case of child exploitation for profit that has never really happened in any society before. We were fortunate enough to see some clips from movies, that make it clear that we are not talking about vague and abstract theories; we are talking about how-to, instructions in the use of illegal, dangerous drugs.

I was struck that all but one of Mr. Valenti's examples of anti-drug programs were from television, for the networks have responded in the last 2 years to public and parental pressure to clean up their act, and they are doing a much better job.

Only one of his examples was a movie, "Midnight Express," which was a glamorization of a drug smuggler. That film was greatly resented in Turkey, where it made them look as though they were criminals for having forced their own drug laws. The movie caused tremendous resentment among members of the United Nations Narcotics Control Commission, that here is a country, Turkey, that does a good job in enforcing its drug laws and it is made fun of in a popular American film.

So that whole tack of Mr. Valenti to show television programs as a defense of the movies seemed very strange to me. We have to look at a very disturbing fact—we are the first society in history that, in the last 5 or 6 years particularly, have inflicted on our children, our pediatric population, not only an exposure but an exhortation to illegal, dangerous, and unhealthy behavior. We have to face the facts that this has never been done before.

What I would like to ask is, why are we doing it? How can the movie industry possibly justify the kind of propaganda that they are giving for this kind of behavior? Let us remember that only 10 years ago we could count on certain ethical assumptions, as parents, as governmental officials, as theater owners in small towns, or cities. As adults we shared certain ethical assumptions. First,

citizens in a democratic society should obey the laws they vote in. Now, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin are not only illegal through our national law but through the United Nations; these drugs are illegal by international law in 115 countries. It is our duty as citizens to obey those laws. Why should movies portray in a casual and glamorous way the breaking of laws? This is increasingly resented in other countries that have the same drug laws we do. They wonder why does Hollywood advocate the breaking of these laws?

Here is a second assumption. A mere 10 years ago we shared as a consensus in this society that adults are legally and morally responsible for ensuring the safety and health of children. That was the rationale behind a sense of common decency, behind the lack of child pornography, the lack of exploitative movies. That is something we still should share as responsible and concerned adults.

A third assumption shared a mere 10 years ago was that adults should not contribute to the delinquency of minors. As we saw from those film clips, nearly every one of them was a direct contribution to the delinquency of minors, for they showed the glamorization and fun of using illegal drugs. We think of our children as beneficiaries of those shared civic motions that were, certainly, in past decades what the movies were all about. We used to not worry about sending kids to movies. Let's remember, that wasn't very long ago. That wasn't so long ago that we can't go back to those days or at least to a more responsible day.

Let's remember that in 1962, less than 1 percent of American teenagers or young adults had ever used marijuana or any other illegal drug. That has risen to over 60 percent in 20 years, a 6000-percent increase that was unprecedented in world history. That's the mess we're living in right now.

What concerned me about the discussion about ratings was the pretension that the R rating is serious.

Chairman ROTH. I am sorry, I couldn't hear you.

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I called it the pretension that the R rating is a serious rating. Mr. Valenti called it a severe rating. Why are dozens, even hundreds of R-rated teenage movies focused and directed only at teenagers? They are the direct customers. Why are they even produced if they are not to be seen by teenagers? I think of "Halloween," "Prom Night," "Porkies," all these kinds of films. No one over 17 would go to see them. They are too juvenile and vulgar, really, for adults to see. The Cheech and Chong movies were targeted at 14 to 16 year olds. Despite their R rating, they were heavily promoted to children. When I go to schools, I ask third and fourth graders, "How many of you have seen the Cheech and Chong movies?" It has never been less than 70 percent of the 8- and 9-year-old children. That is true in Catholic, public, upper class, and slum schools. So the claim that these ratings have anything to do with what children are exposed to is just a pretense, a way of trying to keep people off guard. Let me finish up with just one example.

The other night I suffered through a new teen movie at the shopping mall in our town. It is called "Better Off Dead," and it was recently given a PG rating and advertised as a hilarious teen comedy, wonderful fun. I read many reviews of it. None of them

pointed out that the movie had all kinds of jokes about drugs, about LSD, cocaine, inhalants, nitrous oxide, et cetera.

The film, I think, reaches a new low, because its major comic theme is teenage suicide, which is treated as "no big deal," "so what." Teenage suicide is just fun and games in the same way as drug abuse, drunk driving, careless teenage sex with possibilities of pregnancy because of inadequate birth control. Every teenage problem that we are so concerned about, that is really heartbreaking for the kids, is turned into trivia and jokes in this film, produced by adults and given a PG rating. If any of you go to see a film like this, you will realize that we are not talking about some kind of abstract, theoretical issue of free speech, et cetera. We are talking about the commercial exploitation of our pediatric population. What we really need to address is not just ratings but the way reputable companies, Warner Communications, CBS—they are the producers of this film—are contributing to this problem. Why are these major corporations turning out "teen slasher" films, which are called "Toxic Schlock" even in the industry? The film industry's response to epidemic drug abuse is inverted. It's as if you want to combat malaria sending out all the mosquitoes and then give the parent a mosquito swatter and say, "Have at it. Protect your kid." But, if you want to stop an epidemic, you try to drain the swamps, you try to cut down on the number of mosquitoes out there. What we were not addressing with Mr. Valenti is the tremendous increase in the production of these prodrug movies and their definite targeting to kids, ratings or no ratings.

Thank you.

Chairman ROTH. I want to thank all three of you for your very helpful testimony. On the last point raised, I wonder if the other two members of the panel would comment. Do you feel that there is a continued deterioration in the nature of movies being produced and shown? Is the problem more serious today than it was, say, 5 years ago.

Bishop GAUGHAN. I am saying right now the name of the game is to make a lot of money on teenage movies and use all the devices necessary to make them popular.

Mr. WALL. Mr. Chairman, let me recall the comment that Senator Gore referred to this morning. The National Council of Churches is studying the proliferation of sex and violence in the media, and we have definitely found an increase of this material in films aimed at a young audience. The fear I have in a first amendment oriented society is this: How do we get at that problem without taking the steps we don't want to take? That would concern me a great deal.

This committee is not concerned with the subject of cable television, but our committee found that cable television is really carrying this material to a much wider audience, and we found that very disturbing.

But I would come back to saying, yes, this material is proliferating, it is aimed at young people. Teenage movies clearly mean to get that audience. The industry has got to be brought up short. But we must do it without offending or violating the first amendment.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask the panel this question: Some of our earlier witnesses testified that the movies really merely reflect the mores of society at large, that it is not their fault.

Do you agree with that, or do you think movies and the media generally help reduce the morals of this Nation?

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I think sometimes they do reflect what is going on, but in this case, we have seen a tremendous increase of the inflicting upon young people of the drug habits of script writers and other movie producers. We know this is going on. We know that many of the people who plan and write the scripts that the children see are drug users themselves. They have admitted as much in many public testimonies in the last couple of years. These users then kind of propagate or send out a message of reinforcement for their own illicit behavior.

This is an important issue that has to be addressed. We have heard too many people in the industry say this is going on—that people who like cocaine make cocaine jokes in the movie that goes out not to just teenagers, but to preteens. Recently my 7-year-old daughter saw "Goonies." In clever subtitles there were jokes about cocaine and heroin. I was shocked to see this in a movie for children.

Mr. WALL. What is society? One small little segment of society that believes strongly that cocaine and marijuana are recreational can influence the larger society into accepting that point of view. So if there is a part of society that holds to that; namely, that it's a recreational thing, that it's no big deal, they can, in fact, get this into the film, and then, yes, the full society is strongly influenced and shaped by those films.

Bishop GAUGHAN. In this Freudian society, the child is growing up and saying, "What I am doing? All right, really. It is mom's fault. Mom taught me that it was wrong, but she was wrong."

Chairman ROTH. The thing that bothers me in this area is that through movies and television, they really can reach into practically every home in America; it is bound to have an important impact. It is the old argument about which comes first, the chicken or the egg? But I don't think we can blind ourselves to the fact that these movies, as well as other media events, have a major effect on the morals of our Nation.

Bishop GAUGHAN. As the panelists pointed out, not just America, we are exporting it. We are exporting this culture to other parts of the world. We are going to reap a harvest.

Chairman ROTH. Yes?

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I would like to mention that I was at the first ladies conference at the United Nations on Monday, where there were first ladies of 30 countries, ranging from Nicaragua to Austria. So far, 46 first ladies have come to these drug awareness conferences. What was interesting was that they all shared this concern. All over the world, there is a sense that something is interfering with the capacity of well-meaning parents, whether they're in Tokyo or Mauritius, to get their children safely through the vulnerable, high-risk years of adolescence. There is a sense that the movie industry, as well as the recording and other kinds of media industries, are having the same kind of inversion effect upon the values and ideals of young people all over the world. The United Nations

is getting ready to mount a major global antidrug effort, aimed at alerting parents to these media forces working on their kids and trying to get them to join the parents countermovement. So this isn't just something where Hollywood can sit it out alone.

The concern about drug-promoting films is not confined to a few parents out in the shopping malls or the PTA meetings. It is a concern expressed from people all over the world, from every kind of society. They are all saying, "Why? Why do they keep doing this to kids?"

"What is the point of sending out this kind of message to kids?" So it is a shared, international concern right now.

Chairman ROTH. I suppose if you consider some of the testimony this morning, you might think that there is a satisfaction with the current situation, the current ratings. It seems that the pressure from the private side apparently isn't getting its message home. Would you agree with that?

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I would agree, because I think most parents are very naive about what really is going on in the movies. I think the importance of the Parade Magazine article was that it named the movies that glamorize drugs. I was surprised because my own teenagers had seen most of them. I had no idea that these were druggie movies, even though my kids would talk to me about the movies quite often.

Right now, there is no way to know if movies have drug references, because if you look in the ratings it's just not there. As I say, something like "Goonies" was a big surprise. Why should anyone take a 7-year-old to a movie that has gratuitous jokes about heroin and cocaine, that were very wittily done?

Mr. WALL. Mr. Valenti related many times to himself as being a politician. He certainly is. He is very good at what he does. The Motion Picture Association is very well served by having his image as president. I have known him for 17 years and worked closely with him. He talks about the survey that shows that the public supports the rating system. Yes, it is supporting a rating system, because it does give guidance, but his surveys do not ask the additional matter of, "Do you want more information?"

So I think we have to recognize that he is a politician. He is only going to tell us just what he wants us to hear for the betterment of his industry.

It is the task of the public and the committees like this to come back and say, but let's go a step further, and let us take those additional steps. And believe me, he will take them only if pressure is brought to bear against him to take them.

I hope that this committee hearing and similar kinds of pressures will force him into that action. The information must be added.

Chairman ROTH. I think the one thing that has come through loud and clear is the general desire for more information.

Ms. SCHUCHARD. Yes.

Chairman ROTH. To me, it was interesting that some of the industry, the exhibitors, for whatever motive or reason, agreed that that information should be made available.

Bishop GAUGHAN. The reason they do that is because they live in the community. They get the pressure right at the community

level. The people in Hollywood aren't under pressure. It is the man who runs the motion picture house. The mother calls him up and chews him out, "What do I do?" So on. It's still the community and we have to kind of take it through all the ways we can.

What I'm afraid of is he is going to leave this hearing, and he is going to pass this SA, which won't really solve the problem. It is just another rating, because they are not going to enforce it at the local level, and everybody will be given a pacifier.

Chairman ROTH. Let me just ask some more questions on providing this additional information. We have referred a number of times to this Kansas-Missouri rating experiment. Are any of you familiar with that?

Mr. WALL. Yes. Yes.

Chairman ROTH. One picture is rated R because of language, sensuality, causal. Another picture is rated R because of violence, sensuality, and so forth. Do you find the information given in that experiment to be a major step forward? Do you think that that is the direction you want to go in?

Mr. WALL. It is certainly a step in the right direction. It simply must be developed, adding reference to violence, sexuality, language, drug use, so these terms could become just as much a part of the rating system as PG, PG–13, R, and X. It would become part of the system so that parents would become as conscious of that as they are of the present system.

Chairman ROTH. Do the other two members of the panel agree?

Bishop GAUGHAN. Yes, I just say that for the first time. I am wondering if they consult with some of the groups raising the issue. Again, I wonder if this is an in-house operation to try to calm us all down and just keep us in our place. I would hope that parents and groups that the doctor represents would be consulted and really asked, "What are you looking for in this rating system?"

We have been doing that with our USCC reviews, and we sometimes, have to go into detail because films are very complex these days, and some films, even when we say a film may be offensive, but there are certain values here that you should know about, and then you make the judgment.

So I—somebody was talking about an SA this morning, and SA, given the time span of the American average adult wouldn't mean very much. But as a sharp line or two, as Dr. Wall says, would certainly be helpful.

Chairman ROTH. A number of my questions have involved the proper role of the public in this whole process. Would you like to see the rating group include members of the public or advocates from the parent groups, the church groups?

Mr. WALL. May I speak to that, because I feel strongly about it. Senator, no, I do not, because you are dealing with a very pluralistic society in this country. Once you try to add members of the public to the rating board, you simply do not know where to start or stop. It would not be practical. I am generally well pleased with the Heffner committee, because it is made up of parents. It includes a variety of people. I have met some of them, have talked to some of them. They are very sensitive to these same kind of complaints. I am more concerned with the appeals board, which is very

much an industry entity. Something might be done to improve in that area.

Now, the bishop suggested that we have been invited to sit in on those appeals, but we do not have a vote. We simply are invited as guests to hear the debate. But without a vote, it has relatively little meaning. That might be improved by having a—some input from the public. The rating board itself, I think, properly is an industry entity, a voluntary effort on their part, and I can't imagine how they would ever begin adding citizens without simply opening up a problem they couldn't meet.

Chairman ROTH. Would the other two members of the panel care to comment?

Ms. SCHUCHARD. I think one thing Mr. Shatner suggested would be very important, that is to greatly accelerate the educational efforts within the industry. In the Parade magazine article, Mr. Valenti trivialized the whole idea of marijuana as a drug. He said it is something that all the yuppies use, et cetera. In some ways he shares the same kind of ignorance about marijuana as many of us parents. In trying to deal with children on that issue, it is necessary to update and educate people about the health effects of drugs. I think that is a constructive effort to educate the people actually involved in ratings, production, making decisions, about what the negative medical effects of these drugs are. There are people in the movie industry who are still time locked into 1969, who still think that these are harmless substances. But, in the same way that the rest of the general public is having to learn about drugs, the movie industry needs to learn too.

That would mean the organizations they already have in place could do a better job if they weren't so out of date on the real seriousness of the negative health effects of these drugs.

Chairman ROTH. Bishop?

Bishop GAUGHAN. I still say the main purpose of the industry is to make money, and there will always be those who are testing the outer boundaries of the limits. I am saying somewhere along the line, public apathy, as seen by them, has got to be changed into public concern somewhere. The mothers against drunk driving have certainly got a case against the movie industries. We are certainly onto this. We are attacking the bars on the happy hours, but we maybe ought to go after some of the movies which glamorize drinks and especially teenage drinking as purely a right of passage, that, in fact, that's the way you become a man and then do all the other things you are supposed to do. I think we have just got to make a statement; that is not puritanical for us to say that's not right. I think we have got to somewhere; our task is to mobilize that support and with members of your committee and so on, we hope we are on the way.

Chairman ROTH. Let me ask one final question. I know you are getting weary. Enforcement of the rating system. I think, Bishop, you addressed that. Do you or any member of the panel wish to make any further statements in that area?

Mr. WALL. We have felt, Senator, from the beginning that that was a serious problem. I think enforcement in the very beginning under NATO was pretty good. I think enforcement today is rather lax. When you have 16-year-old ticket takers and ticket sellers

trying to keep 16-year-olds out of the theater, you are in bad shape. Nothing other than pressure, however, will make that any different. These hearings are one area. It is possible that local communities may end up having to pass local legislation that say, this will be enforced. I think that would call up the theater owners short in a hurry. It is lax, there is no question about that.

Bishop GAUGHAN. But we are into the motion picture exhibitors. They don't get much money from the tickets. That is all in Hollywood. They make their numbers on the people who come in and purchase popcorn, and we know what voracious appetites teenagers have for junk food. So their purpose is to get those bodies in there and whatever gets them in, you know, I'm not saying they're heartless men. I'm still saying they are in the business of trying to stay above the water.

So they may not want to police simply because their livelihood is threatened on that basis. When you got money from the ticket, it was a different thing.

Chairman ROTH. I want to thank each of you and express my appreciation, not only for being here today, but the interest you have shown in what I consider to be a very serious problem for this country. Like you, I am a strong believer in the first amendment, and the question of how you reconcile that with the most serious problem of drug abuse or glamorization or increased use of drugs is one of the most difficult problems we face.

I think the more that can be done by those in the private sector, the better off we are. We are, indeed, grateful to each and every one of you.

Thank you very much.

Bishop GAUGHAN. Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statements of Bishop Gaughan, Mr. Wall, and Dr. Schuchard follow:]

# Testimony of The Most Reverend Norbert F. Gaughan

Bishop of Gary, Indiana
and Immediate Past Chairman
United States Catholic Conference
Communication Committee

Before the

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
United States Senate

Regarding the Promotion of
Drug and Alcohol Abuse
in Theatrically-Released Motion Pictures
Marketed to Teenage Viewers

Thursday, October 24th, 1985

## I. Interest of the U.S. Catholic Conference

The U.S. Catholic Conference is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia. Its members are the active Catholic Bishops in the United States. The Conference advocates and promotes the pastoral teaching of the Bishops in such diverse areas as education, family life, health and hospitals, social welfare, immigrant aid, poverty assistance, civic education, youth activities, and communications.

The USCC Communication Committee, on which I served as the immediate past-chairman, is charged by the United States Catholic Conference to represent the interests of the Catholic Church in the area of media. Because of the pervasive influence on society, but most particularly on the young, of motion pictures, this vehicle of communication as a transmitter of social values is a matter of primary concern to the United States Catholic Conference.

While the traditional concern of religious and other civic-minded groups as regards motion pictures has been the exploitative use of sex and violence, particularly in films aimed at youth, the promotion of substance abuse, both drugs and alcohol, in youth-oriented films has become an increasing concern generally to parents, church leaders, and those others responsible for the education and upbringing of the young.

Drug abuse among the young is a problem of significant proportions. Only this month the Atlanta-based National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education released the findings of its recently-concluded survey of 45,000 sixth through twelfth graders; the study showed that in 1984 9.4% of high school seniors used cocaine at least once, up from 7.1% in the 1983 survey. What makes this study particularly important is that 80% of those surveyed were from the Southeast, the most conservative area of the country in terms of drug use, according to Thomas J. Gleaton, the director of the survey.

Another recent survey based on callers to a national cocaine hotline indicated that 68% of these callers believe that their grades dropped due to drug use; 21% had at least one drug-related car accident, and 18% had attempted suicide related to drugs.

What relationship the glorification of drug abuse in motion pictures has to these startling statistics is not at the present time scientifically documentable; that such a relationship exists is gaining increasing acceptance by those who are tracking this regrettable phenomenon. Key to an understanding of this influence, of course, is not only the presence of drug usage in movies being exhibited in the nation's movie theaters, but the fact that these same films are now increasingly available on video tape and through pay cable and broadcast outlets.

## II. History of the USCC's Involvement In the Motion Picture Medium

The influence of the motion picture medium upon the young is not a recent concern of the Catholic Conference. The USCC has been active in this area over the past half-century through its own classification system by which movies are rated according to moral acceptability and age suitability. Originally begun in 1936 as a response to the release of movies that exceeded the standards of the then Hollywood Production Code, these ratings have continued to provide the Catholic audience, especially parents, with a reliable guide to their selection of worthwhile entertainment for their children.

The USCC's Department of Communication rates and also reviews some 250 theatrically-released motion pictures each year. These materials are carried on a weekly basis in over 100 Catholic newspapers throughout the country. We are not aware of any other such non-industry service currently available to the American public.

The USCC's viewpoint in its evaluation of motion pictures is inspired by a broad Judeo-Christian perspective. Integral to this process is the conviction that the work of the creative artist at its profoundest level can advance our understanding of ourselves, impress us with the human being's potential for greatness or self-destruction, and deepen our consciousness of our relationship to our fellowman. Against a background of such criteria the USCC reviews films and arrives at its judgments through a consensus procedure resulting from consultation with a board of reviewers, made up of teachers on the secondary, college and university levels, film educators, professional critics, psychologists, clergy and parents. The USCC's critiques, therefore, represent a broad spectrum of opinion and a considerable expenditure of talent and resources.

Integral to the USCC's film rating and review service is the recognition that the complexity of contemporary motion pictures -- in both their content and format -- render traditional rating/classification systems only a first step, a negative rule of thumb, in the public's discriminating choice of motion pictures. This limited value of classifications makes it imperative that any rating system clearly indicate the rationale upon which the rating is based in each specific case. This is why the USCC provides at least a capsule review for every film it rates.

In addition, this service of the USCC is premised on a long-standing policy of opposition to any government control of the media of communication which is not consistent with the just demands of the First Amendment, recognizing that government supervision carries with it serious dangers of its own. It is far more preferable that those responsible for the production and

exhibition of films provide, on a voluntary basis, information related to the suitability of motion pictures for different audiences, or that non-governmental organizations in the public sector provide this information.

## III. USCC Critique of The Motion Picture Association of America's Rating System

The USCC welcomed the introduction of the MPAA's rating system in 1968, something it had begun urging the industry to initiate in 1962. Indeed, the MPAA had consulted with the USCC, together with other religious and civic organizations during the planning and implementation stages of its new rating system.

It is important to recall the circumstances under which this system was introduced. In the late '60s, the American motion picture industry had fallen on bad economic days: the inroads that television was making on box office ticket sales, and the significant impact of the popularity of foreign films, led the industry to seek new subject matter that could not be found on the home television screen. The major counter-attack of the industry, the introduction of so-called "adult material" into Hollywood product, in turn led to calls for the creation of state censorship boards to contain the more serious excesses of movies going into general release. Such boards would have made national distribution of motion pictures a nightmare for the American film industry.

In this context the motion picture industry proposed voluntarily to provide some guidance to parents, and limited age restrictions to protect the young and impressionable from its own excesses.

When the MPAA announced the rating system in October, 1968 the USCC endorsed it as "being consistent with the rights and obligations of free speech and artistic expression, as well as with the duty of parents and society to safeguard the young in their growth to responsible adulthood".

At that time the USCC urged the public to avoid making premature judgments on this new plan. The USCC promised to work closely with the plan to help its implementation, and to report back to the public on its estimate of the success of the system.

In May of 1970 the USCC warned parents and the film industry that the rating system was not working well. The Conference stated that the system was in "proximate danger of failure" unless immediate steps were taken to improve the system in the following areas: more reliability in the ratings themselves, and especially in the then "GP" (Parental Guidance) rating; better theater compliance; more honesty in advertising; and elimination of "R" and "X" trailers shown with "G" and "GP" films.

In May of 1971 the USCC withdrew it support of the MPAA rating

system. The Conference concluded that the MPAA had not measurably improved the system, and that the ratings themselves had become even less reliable.

At the core of the USCC's criticism was our concern that the criteria upon which the ratings were being issued were based more on the MPAA's evaluation of "what the traffic would bear" regarding explicit visuals and language, and what was prosecutable under obscenity statutes in a court of law (the "X" rating) than on any sense of what social values or, more to the point, anti-social values were being transmitted through motion pictures, particularly those motion pictures aimed at the youth market.

Integral to this criticism was the fact that when the MPAA introduced its rating system it, in effect, jettisoned its code of self-regulation, a declaration of principles that, however limited, had at least served to curb the more exploitative of its member companies. One of the principles of that code, updated as late as 1966, stated "special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or anti-social activities in which minors participate or are involved".

Between 1971 and the present the USCC has continued to offer periodic critiques of the system, while at the same time providing its our own ratings and reviews. One element of the USCC's service is the listing of the MPAA rating next to the USCC rating, principally in order to highlight the different evaluations being offered by the two systems relative to the same product.

At the same time, the USCC Department of Communication has also continued to accept the MPAA's offer to attend its Appeals Board Hearings, where distributors of films who wish to contest an MPAA rating may seek a second hearing on the rating applied to their film. Both the MPAA and the USCC have endeavored to keep the lines of communication open.

The USCC's most recent criticism of the MPAA's rating system occurred in July, 1984, regarding the introduction of the so-called "PG-13" film rating, which the MPAA introduced one year ago this past summer.

In its press release on this subject the USCC criticized the introduction of the "PG-13" rating on the grounds that a) films previously rated "R" (restricted for under 17-year-olds) may now be classified "PG-13" (unrestricted); (b) the rating was developed without consultation with educational and religious organizations; and c) the new rating would only further weaken the system's credibility with the public. Further, the USCC characterized the "PG-13" rating as a "transparent ploy to exploit the young for crass commercial purposes".

## IV. Examples of Films Promoting Substance Abuse Improperly Rated by the MPAA

In the light of the MPAA's track record regarding its lax standards for applying its ratings, it was inevitable that a Subcommittee such as this would be called upon to surface the public's concern over films promoting substance abuse aimed at the youth market, which carry no MPAA age restrictions.

In discussing these films it is important to understand the context described above in which the USCC approaches a critique of films aimed at the young, as well as the Conference's larger concerns with the MPAA's rating system.

In "Poltergeist", an MGM/UA release directed by Steven Spielberg who was responsible for ET, a film phenomenally successful among younger audiences, a suburban couple find their cozy existence disturbed when a gnarled old tree reaches through a bedroom window and snatches away their young son. When they rush outside to cope with this unprovoked attack, certain spirits, somehow released from the television set by their five-year-old daughter, carry off the girl. In order to get her back the distraught parents call in a team of parapsychologists, and we're off on another Spielberg special effects performance. In addition to the violence, certainly too strong for younger children, there is a scene in which the viewers get a benign look at the mother and father -- principal characters presented as admirable in every way -- giggling over a marijuana cigarette that they are sharing before bedtime. This totally gratuitous scene of drug use by adults in a major American motion picture directed squarely at the teen and pre-teen audience is, in our judgment, inexcusable, particularly granted the positive parental role models being presented here. The USCC classified "Poltergeist" morally objectionable for this as well as several scenes of violence and sexual innuendo involving the family's teenage daughter. The MPAA rated the film PG.

"Sixteen Candles", a Universal release, is a film aimed even more directly at teenagers. This is an old fashioned comedy about the anguish of adolescence. A teenage girl is pursued by a skinny freshman while longing for a handsome, unobtainable senior, etc., etc., etc. "Sixteen Candles" features foul language, nudity, racism, and a benign view of fornication. The film also dabbles with teenage alcohol abuse, and features a sequence of drunken antics at a high school "beer bust". Two of the characters engage in sexual intercourse when they are too drunk to be altogether sure afterwards what actually took place. Driving while drunk is also presented in a humorous fashion. The USCC rated this film morally objectionable; the MPAA's rating was PG.

"Teen Wolf", an Atlantic release, is a simple-minded comedy, also aimed at teenagers, about a high school youngster who achieves popularity when he discovers that he is a werewolf. One scene

involves another "beer bust", and in another the hero, once he becomes a werewolf, has a nose keen enough to sniff out the stash of marijuana that a friend of his has lost track of. There are also scenes of reckless driving, combined with beer drinking. "Teen Wolf" avoided the USCC's most severe rating because there was no depiction of actual drunkenness on the part of the hero, or of actual indulgence in marijuana. The Conference therefore gave the film an adult rating (not that any adult would want to see it). The MPAA rated the film PG.

These three films are only a cursory example of the type of movies being produced today for America's teenagers. The MPAA's rating approach to these films speaks for itself.

## V. Recommendations

Over the years since 1968, the MPAA has tinkered incessantly with its rating symbols, as well as the definitions of the ratings. "M" (mature audiences) became "GP" (parental guidance, frequently misunderstood for general patronage) which, in turn, became "PG" (most clearly recognized as parental guidance). Most recently the Association added the "PG-13" rating to its list, a move that was criticized by the USCC for the reasons already cited.

The USCC recommendations are as follows:

1. A rating system can only be effective for a mass audience if its meaning is widely publicized. The USCC is particularly sensitive to this need insomuch as we have experienced it directly. In our judgment there is absolutely no need for more MPAA rating symbols. More symbols will only further confuse the system, which is already susceptible to misunderstanding.

2. What is most desperately needed, in the light of the statistics quoted at the outset of this testimony, is a clear and forthright determination by the MPAA to apply its current ratings as they were intended. Films aimed at the youth market which promote substance abuse should be rated "R" (under 17-years-old not permitted without parent or adult guardian).

3. The motion picture industry should set up an effective self-policing mechanism to assure that those movie theaters which allow under 17's into "R" rated movies are appropriately recognized in the public forum. Box office receipts must give way to a larger concern for the public good.

4. Finally, the USCC continues to urge the MPAA to provide some brief explanation for parents as to its reasons for applying a given rating to a specific film. Ultimately parents are the arbitors of what their children will see in the nation's movie theaters. Any rating system, the MPAA's as well as the USCC's, is only as credible as the rationale for the application of its classifications. Parents cannot be expected to make intelligent, informed decisions regarding their children's choice of motion picture entertainment unless they are provided with some clear and succinct rationale on which to base that decision.

I would like to thank this Subcommittee for inviting the USCC to testify at this hearing. In closing, I would simply like to restate support of the USCC for the Subcommittee's concern in this area, which is so critical for the future of America's young people.

STATEMENT PREPARED FOR:

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

United States Senate

Senator William V. Roth, Jr., chairman

By:

James M. Wall
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I appear before you this morning in my capacity as editor and film critic for a magazine, Christian Century, and as a person who has taught courses in film criticism and religion for various theological seminaries in this country. I also appear as one who has worked closely with the Motion Picture Producers' Association since 1968 in the developing of its ratings system for theatrical motion pictures.

When this system was proposed, Jack Valenti, then and now the president of MPPA, asked representatives of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish organizations to meet with his staff to discuss the structure, administration and content of the system. From the beginning I have been a strong supporter of these ratings because I believe strongly in the freedom of film artists to work without the pressure of censorship. At the same time, it is essential that parents be provided with information regarding films so they might make the best possible decisions regarding which films their children should see. This is why the rating system, with its classification identifying pictures as unsuitable for certain age brackets, is so important.

I have served for the past 8 years as chairman of a special

subcommittee of the National Council of Churches which relates to the film industry on general topics, but with a special concern for the rating system. Periodically our committee meets with Mr. Valenti, Richard Heffner, chairman of the rating board, and members of the National Association of Theatre Owners to discuss how the rating system is working.

As a committee we take certain positions and then present them in our discussions with the industry leaders. For example, we strongly favored a new rating to provide further information for parents which would distinguish between films suitable for young teen-agers and those appropriate for children. We preferred a "restricted" rating for what has been adopted as the PG-13 rating, and although we did not succeed in persuading Mr. Valenti and his organization to restrict the PG-13 category, we do believe this represents an advance in the fundamental purpose of the system. Films bearing the PG-13 rating may be seen without parental accompaniment by youngsters under the age of 17, but at least that designation is a signal to parents that something is in the film which the industry itself feels is inappropriate for anyone in the pre-teen age bracket.

Over the past several years we have urged Mr. Valenti to take a further step in serving parents who must make decisions regarding their childrens' film attendance. Since the fundamental purpose of the system is <u>information</u>, we feel it is essential that a short phrase be added to the ratings to explain what category of material caused the rating board to render this particular judgment. Thus far we have

been unsuccessful in persuading Mr. Valenti to add this short-phrase designation, in spite of the fact that on at least one occasion we offered him a list of specific film titles with appropriate phrases added. It is my understanding also that the MPAA has conducted its own field testing and shown that the information could be identified and provided as part of the regular MPAA information service.

The general areas of concern to parents would include violence, nudity, language, explicit sexual activity, and to the point of these hearings, drug use. By a simple phrase attached to the existing G-PG-PG13-R and X ratings, parents would receive additional information alerting them to the adult-oriented area for which a particular film has been flagged. This is important information because parental reaction must be based on maximum information. If a film is rated PG-13, for example, for drug use, the parents of an 8-year-old would be warned that their child could avoid exposure to material which might tend to glamourize drug use.

This information could be supplied with the ratings, and should appear, where possible, in newspaper advertising. The larger ads could certainly have room for this additional information, and theater managers would always have at hand the official industry guide which they could supply parents who call or personally request the reasons for the ratings.

There have been many recent films which include casual use of cocaine or the smoking of marijuana. This material has been introduced as a source of humor—as in Private Benjamin—or as a natural action

for parents—as in Poltegeist—or as an opportunity to relax in order to remember the good old days—as in The Big Chill. I personally abhor the inclusion of this positive presentation of marijuana smoking as cultural conditioning which re-enforces adult attitudes and establishes attitudes of the young. However, in a free society, we must be careful not to forbid content, but to inform the public of what is in a film.

I have written in my magazine of the fact that cigarette-smoking, which was much more in favor in the pre-cancer awareness days, was once an easy prop for film-makers to depict sophistication or sexuality or manliness. Today's films rarely show cigarette smoking in a positive light. But many appear to stress the positive benefits of pot.

The inclusion of a drug use designation along with the other references to violence, sexual behaviour, nudity and language, would provide a needed help to parents. I hope that these hearings will alert the film industry to the importance of making this improvement in the system.

TESTIMONY OF MARSHA KEITH SCHUCHARD

CO-FOUNDER OF PARENTS' RESOURCE INSTITUTE FOR DRUG EDUCATION

This Senate Hearing on the issue of movies, drugs and children would have been inconceivable and unnecessary in the decades when most of us grew up. While the children of the Fifties and early Sixties certainly attended and loved the movies as much or more than those of the Eighties, their parents -- and the government they elect to represent them -- had little to worry about or fear from their children's exposure to Hollywood's cinematic visions. The promotion of illegal drug use, or illegal behavior of any kind, was not the stock in trade of the movie industry. Until the past decade, our society still shared the common ethical assumptions that citizens in a democratic society should obey the laws they vote in, that adults are legally and morally responsible for ensuring the health and safety of children, and that adults should not contribute to the delinquency of minors. Our children were the beneficiaries of those civic notions, and their behavior reflected the clear guidance those standards provided.

Let us remember that as late as 1962, less than 1% of American teenagers and young adults had ever tried marijuana or any other illegal drug. By 1980, over 60% had used drugs -- a 6,000% increase in two decades, an epidemic unprecedented in world history. The resultant national tragedy -- of impaired lives, blighted futures, and deaths -- has forced parents and all citizens who care about children to ask some hard and searching questions: How did we get into this mess? The historic importance of this meeting of parents, concerned citizens, representatives of the movie business, and our elected representatives is that we have a realistic and

practical opportunity to extricate ourselves from this aberration in our national history.

I emphasize aberration because the promoters of the drug culture work daily in the media to convince the public, especially the young, that drugs are here to stay and that we should accomodate ourselves to this inevitable reality. But, despite the well-publicized prophets of doom, twenty years of trend is not an irreversible trend. Growing numbers of adults and teenagers do not buy the pessimistic message, and they have no intention of sacrificing the health and safety of their children and friends to the increasingly predatory merchandisers of drugs. But to accomplish our goal of a drug-free society for the next generation, we must reclaim our popular culture. The movie industry has a powerful role in this historic contest -- for better or worse, for destruction or construction.

Let us first examine the negative, destructive role of the drug culture in the movie industry -- a role that many fine people in the industry do not agree with or support. Many of them are not even aware of the messages of the drug culture, any more than the millions of naive and uninformed parents who have lost children to that culture. Let us focus on the gateway drug -- marijuana -- that unraveled our protective laws and mores. In 1961, the United Nations formulated an international treaty, The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which banned by international law the use, possession, or cultivation of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and other drugs of abuse. The long historic experience of Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and other nations with marijuana and hashish had convinced them that the drug caused stupefaction and stagnation; its negative effects of immunity, reproductive and sexual function, and mental health made it an enemy of national progress.

These nations worked tirelessly to eliminate hashish in their own countries, and they asked for international cooperation in breaking the drug trade. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson, with full bipartisan support, signed that United Nations Treaty, which remains the highest law of the land today, not only in the U.S. but in 115 members of the United Nations. During these hearings, let us remember that marijuana and cocaine are illegal by local, state, federal and international law.

In the late Sixties, as drug references began to creep into movies, this legal and cultural reality was reflected pretty accurately. Drug use was portrayed as aberrant, illicit behavior, a clear deviation from mainstream norms. Even "Easy Rider", one of the first drug-promotion films, was clearly a counter-cultural, protest film. A few years later, "M.A.S.H.", which inaccurately and anachonistically showed pot-smoking G.I.'s in Korea in the 1950's, was also a protest movie. These early films were aimed at college-educated young adults and functioned within an intellectual context of political debate. The drug portrayal was not trivial nor mercenary, but rather functioned as part of a serious, though controversial, context. Gradually, though, in the mid-Seventies, deliberate effort to expand the drug consumer market and to mainstream drug use was undertaken by NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. NORML and its supporters worked in many professional and marketing fields in order to "normalize" marijuana use, with cocaine and heroin expected to follow suit. By 1978, NORML's director, Keith Stroup, could publicly boast that "marijuana has gone middle-class; now we're going to do for marijuana what somebody did for tennis shoes." The new merchandizers of "tennis shoe" drugs pulled out the stops of American marketing techniques, and utilized tee-shirts, comic books, toys, candy, record albums, and, especially, movies -- to build their consumer market. The

large audience was defined increasingly by the profit motive, which pointed to teenagers as the major growth market for drugs and, simultaneously, as the major consumer market for movies. Thus, we saw the ordinary, mainstream teens of the Seventies -- distanced by a decade from the political issues of the Sixties -- given a steady dose of revisionist history. More and more movies implied that drug use has always been an All-American, normal part of teenage social life, even in the Fifties and early Sixties. The movie "Animal House" showed fraternity and sorority students smoking pot in 1961, behavior unheard of then. The Academy Award winner, "Terms of Endearment," showed upper middle-class young ladies smoking pot in Houston, Texas in 1962, something doubly unheard of then. Many nostalgia films about the Fifties showed drug use as routine stuff. This deliberate re-writing of history feeds the sense of prevasiveness and inevitability of the drug epidemic.

In the mid-Seventies we also saw movies reverse the perspective on the narcotics law-enforcer and the drug-law breaker, as in "Midnight Express" where the drug smuggler -- a criminal under many statutes -- is portrayed as the persecuted, good-guy hero. By the early Eighties, the best bastion of teenage idealism -- the Olympic athlete -- were portrayed positively, even glowingly, as members of the drug culture. In "Personal Best" a teenage athlete, appealingly played by a wholesome looking Mariel Hemingway, is shown in a context of heavy drinking, marijuana usage, Quaaludes, and opium smoking. The portrayal of opium smoking, as a cure for diarrhea (whatever happened to Paregoric?), was an unfortunate hint as the drug culture's new marketing of smokeable heroin. A mere five years ago, "Personal Best" would have received an X-rating, because of the full frontal nudity of both sexes and the profusion of profanity. Critics and reviewers writing in the family newspaper would have accurately labeled it "sexist

exploitation" and, at least, have warned that it's pretty randy stuff. Instead, both studio advertising and reviewers described the film as a beautiful tribute to youthful athletics. One reviewer praised it as "X-Rated Innocence," a kind of critical double-talk for child pornography.

With heroes and athletes increasingly portrayed as drug users, the movies targeted younger and younger consumers, while drug usage moved steadily downward into junior highs and grade schools. The five "Cheech and Chong" films, which are Laurel and Hardy-type drug comedies, reaped millions of dollars from children 8 to 15 years old. In 1979 in Atlanta, commercials for "Cheech and Chong" movies were shown during afternoon and Saturday morning cartoon hours. The movie studio had paid off a youth charity and utilized its public service slots on T.V. to show primary school children how much fun it is to smoke pot. The Atlanta newspaper ran full-page ads for "Up in Smoke" that showed the comedians smoking huge joints while driving down the freeway, while the headlines subtly exhorted the kids to roll joints in their theatre seats and fill the auditorium with pot smoke. When drug education teachers ask Fourth Graders, all over the country, how many have watched a "Cheech and Chong" movie, the answer is invariably 70 to 80%. It should not be surprising, then, that the latest Weekly Reader survey of eight and nine year olds reported that "seeing other kids in movies and T.V." is the primary source for learning that drug-taking is fun. Certainly, my seven year-old daughter saw her first drug jokes in a movie, for I recently took her to see "Goonies" rated PG, where she eagerly spelled out the jokes about marijuana, cocaine, and heroin that were wittily given in sub-titles.

Let me conclude with a brief description of a movie I saw on October 15 at a suburban shopping mall, for it represents the nadir of nihilistic youth films. "Better Off Dead" rated PG and aimed at the teen and pre-teenage group, breaks new ground by using teenage suicide as its comic theme. This film takes the most serious and tragic problems of teens today -- suicide, careless sex and pregnancy, use of inhalants, cocaine, and LSD, underage drinking, reckless driving -- and turns them into jokes, amusing trivia. The parents of the suicidal teen are portrayed as bumbling fools, especially the father. Worried about his confused and self-destructive son, the father gets a book entitled, Youth and the Drug Explosion and tries to diagnose and help his son. Ha, ha! -- What a cretin, chortle our film-makers, as the movie shows that a real friend knows how to inhale nitrous oxide out of a whipped cream can and how to snort Jello like cocaine. The really successful figure is the eight year-old brother who has an orgy with hookers and booze. The theme song, sold in the sound-track album, croons, "I'd Be Better Off Dead Than To Live Without You" -- a healthy message for teens trying to cope with the normal heartbreaks and pains of youthful romance. This film succeeds in its bland and perverse way of normalizing drug abuse and suicide into "tennis shoe" insignificance.

The important question for this Hearing to address is why do major corporations, major studios, major manufacturers lend their names to these teen exploitation films? Why would Warner Communications, a reputable corporation, and CBS, a prestige broadcasting company, lend their imprimatur to a schlocky film whose nihilistic message is that nothing matters but scoring sexually or scoring athletically, always in a mindless, distorted context. Why would the manufacturing companies whose products and brand-names are blatantly displayed (like commercials) in scene after scene want to be a visable party to this?

More important is the question -- which the movie industry as well as parents, citizens, and politicians must seriously address -- why are we doing this to our children? Are we going to keep doing it? Or, can we as a democratic society of responsible adults say, "Enough is enough"? As a parent, a realist, a populist, and an optimist, I say, "Of course we can." Let us begin today.

Chairman ROTH. The subcommittee is in recess.

[Whereupon, at 2:15 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

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